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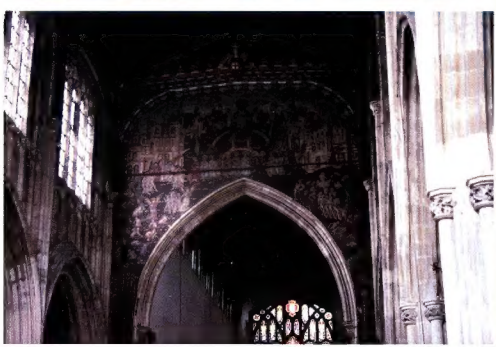
CEREBUS LATTER DAYS 18

Yes. We know it's hard to believe but trust us that

Cerebus is "Still Chasing YHWH"



283 OCT

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS A TAP-DANCE STUDIOS PRODUCTION OF GOD YHWH "STILL CHASING YHWH" CEREBUS KONIGSBERG, THE NOT-SO-GOOD SAMARITAN ME, AS THE STENOGRAPHER CASTING BY DAVE SIM MUSIC BY DIRTY SHIRT EDITOR OH YEAH RIGHT PRODUCTION DESIGN BY GERHARD POST PRODUCTION CHRIS VERHOEVEN EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS DAVE SIM GERHARD WAYNE MARKLEY MATTHEW HIGH BEN CORNISH RICHARD DAVIES ANTOINETTE JACKSON DIRECTED BY DAVE SIM WRITTEN BY DAVE SIM BASED ON THE 1611 KING JAMES BIBLE TITLES HARVEY EISNER BRIDESMAID

ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA TO MENTION STEVE GEPPI PLENTY OF ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACKS AVAILABLE IN RECORD STORES READ THE NOVELIZATION BY PETER DAVID www.stillnotGOD.kingwebsite.com

acknowledgement

Sgt. 1st Class Christopher J. Speer

Reading the news clippings that I have been saving in preparation for "Why Canada Slept" (beginning in this issue), I honestly thought that my opinion of Her Majesty's Government of the day, the Chrétien Liberals, could not sink any lower than it already has. It turns out I was wrong. The Department of Foreign Affairs released a statement this morning (6 September) which reads in part: "The Department is concerned that a Canadian juvenile has been detained, and believes that this individual's age should be taken into account in determining treatment. It is an unfortunate reality that juveniles are too often the victims in military actions and that many groups and countries actively recruit and use them in armed conflicts and in terrorist activities. Canadians detained in foreign jurisdictions have the right, if they request it, to meet with a Canadian consular official. In meeting with such persons, Canadian officials are not making a judgment on the validity of the detention or the validity of any charges that may subsequently be brought. Because of the ongoing conflict, the situation in Afghanistan is a complex one and as a result, the principles usually followed when Canadians are detained in foreign countries in times of peace do not necessarily apply." The statement also said Canada "is satisfied that individuals held by the U.S. are being treated humanely".

For what little it is worth: in the absence of any formal recognition or apology from the Government of Canada for the death in Afghanistan of U.S. Sgt. 1st Class Christopher J. Speer at the hands of Omar Khadr, a 15-year-old Canadian citizen and *unlawful combatant* (or at the hands of the *unlawful combatants* in whose company he was acting) I would like to extend my personal acknowledgement of Sgt. Speer's contribution to the war on terrorism, and of his having paid the ultimate price on behalf of all free peoples and to offer my own apology for the mealy-mouthed tone of the Foreign Affairs statement quoted above. The United States of America has proven itself to be above reproach in the area of human rights and the humane treatment of even the most venal and conscienceless perpetrators of high crimes against its territory and against its citizens (in which category I place, without reservation, those who would direct gunfire at an *army medic* such as Sgt. Speer).

To describe, even *obliquely*, the murderer (or accomplice of the murderers) of Sgt. Christopher J. Speer as a "victim" plumbs depths of dishonor which, until this morning, I would have thought inconceivable—*particularly* in a country which is still nursing a grudge over President Bush not *immediately* expressing his regret over the *entirely accidental* deaths of four Canadians in a "friendly fire" incident in Afghanistan in April of this year.

Sgt. Speer's sterling example of devotion to duty and service and sacrifice in the defense of freedom and democracy will, I am sure, serve his son, Tanner (age 11 months) in good stead as he grows into manhood.

CEREBUS
NO. 283 OCTOBER 2002

DAVE SIM
Creator, Writer
Characters/
pencil & ink,
mechanical tones,
lettering

GERHARD
Background
Artist/pencil & ink

CHRIS VERHOEVEN
Cover Technician

KEN SIM
Cover Photo

LATTER DAYS
•
PROLOGUE
(Cerebus 266
and 267)
•
BOOK ONE
(Cerebus 268 to
288)
•
BOOK TWO
(Cerebus 289 to
300)

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28th of Steve 75 - I have been re-reading, Fyodor Mihailovich Mishkin's "The Putz" and have realized, as a consequence, that my destiny, the Solution to All my problems lies not in the psychotherapeutic Complexities of Fraud -- but, rather, in the existential Simplicity of Mishkin! Struck by the irrefutable logic of my own argument, I have resolved to become a Tanchyan peasant.

30th of Steve 75 - Step one in my transformation has been accomplished! I have just now returned from the casino at the seaside resort of Vegas-Vegas where -- with a mere dozen swift passes of the dice ("Babushka needs a new pair of shoes!") -- I have managed to attain an Official State of Thoroughly Straitened Circumstances (attributable in no small part to the fact that I was throwing the dice into the roulette wheel.)

31st of Steve 75 - Leaving, nothing to chance, "Putz"-wise, this morning, I pawned my pocket-watch, borrowed 5 crowns from my ex-wife and a further 15 crowns against future royalties from my proposed "Memoirs of a Latter-Day 'Putz': My Life as a Tanchyan Peasant" staking the entire amount on Red 35. Destiny, it seems, has once more taken a hand in the proceedings when I discover that I'm sitting at a baccarat table.

35th of Steve 75 - Step two: I persuade Ceretous to allow me to become his tenant-farmer, sharecropping beets in one corner of the Sanctuary courtyard. Beets! Whose name in Ancient Detrusion, *Beta Vulgaris*, so aptly mirrors my new self-image as an irredeemable but humble escape-grace. Beets! Which I will make into borscht -- eating, it cold in the winter and scalding hot in the summer -- to prove that I'm the Real Peasant McCoy and not some Bourgeois Dilettante. Beets! Which -- being, biennials -- guarantee me a two-year head start on my proletarian suffering, even before my first harvest!

38th of Steve 75 - My business cards arrived at noon. Having decided that I was too old to be described as "Konigsberg, the Georgic Swain" and feeling quite strongly that "Konigsberg, the Bucolic Bumpkin" lacked dignity, my apprehension grows as I unwrap the package. All my anxiety has been for nought: "Konigsberg, the Unmoneyed Agronomist" and a post office box number in *sans serif* block letters bring a tear to my eye, a lump to my throat and another 5 crowns to my insurmountable mountain of debt. Encouraged by the ease and swiftness with which my new-found Peasantry has come to fruition, I resolve to subdivide my meager land holdings with a half-dozen marijuana plants of inferior quality out of whose fibres I intend to weave my own antlesse and prosaic clothing, sheets, pillowcases, insulation, leg-warmers, sofa cushions tea cozies and smokeable shag carpeting.

45th of Steve 75 - Disaster! It seems that -- with my unauthorized use of the officially sanctioned Tanchyan peasant "frilled" peasant blouse "buccaneer" trousers and roll-top boots and my violation of their exclusive proprietorship over the term "Tanchyan peasant" -- I have

run afoul of the Tanchyan People's Amalgamated Outside Subsistence Agrarians and Marijuana Textiles and Clothing Workers of Extinction (Local 1224). Just this morning, a dozen T.P.A.O.S.A.a.M.T.a.C.W.o.E. Joyful-Compliance and Peaceful-Co-Existence Officers press-ganged me into one of their uniforms and told me that I had—as a consequence of my deconstruction-alistic and disassimilative anti-synergeasticisms—inadvertently volunteered for a period of indentured servitude (the "indentured" servitude part consisting of the Tanchyan People's Dental Beautification and Improvement Program)(under which three of my molars had brought about the end of their unlawful occupation of my stomatic cavity through cowardly running-dog, assaults upon the Tanchyan People's Rifle Butts of Oracular Liberation) of not-less-than-five and not-more-than-ten years. (Ten YEARS!)

It is while I am being manhandled through the streets to the toe-tapping, refrain of the Joyful Compliance and Peaceful Co-Existence People's Musical March of Solidarity and Exclusion (we had just enacted the Movement wherein Exclusion discovers that his own scabbard is filled with everyone else's used chewing gum but hadn't reached the Overture wherein all of the members representing Solidarity brandish their own fabrics of Belonging and Wellness and begin, playfully, to gauge out small chunks of Exclusion's flesh) that Cerebus happens across us. What a stroke of luck that he just happens to have with him a copy of the Cerebite/Tanchyan Non-Aggression Pact of 59 which specifies that Cerebus would allow the annual duty-free importation of five metric tonnes of mordantly introspective Tanchyan Literature (specifically limited to those works consisting of strangely grandiloquent navel-gazing casts of fifty or more characters all engaged in incestuous and near-incestuous romantic entanglements) as well as several "langish"-sized bottles of "Wot-ka" (whatever *that* is) and two or three tins of edible (I'll take his word for it) salty black fish-egg jelly—in exchange for maintaining absolute dominion over anyone residing...permanently *or* temporarily...on Cerebite lands.

Realizing that they themselves were "temporarily residing" on Cerebite lands (and having been informed that I was considered something of a confidant to the One True Cerebus), the Joyful Compliance and Peaceful Co-existence Officers quickly changed formation from the People's Musical March of Solidarity and Exclusion to the more stream-lined People's "Lindy Hop" of Stalwart Leave-Taking and Swift and Progressive Retrenchment. Before you could say "Rigorous Enactment of the People's Proletarian Ideal Through the Unrelenting Suppression of Gender Distinctions," they were off like a shot, so dazzling us with a combination mazurka/fox-trot that they were out of sight before anyone could think to hold them for further questioning.

46th of Steve 75 - Although I no longer refer to myself as a Tanchyan peasant, like Mishkin, I am now firmly convinced that God does not exist although, also like Mishkin, I believe strongly that Rick AND Cerebus represent the highest state of achievement of which Man is capable and that all men must aspire to emulating every aspect of their lives. (Although, like Mishkin, I believe Rick AND Cerebus would have achieved an even MORE exalted state of being had they—like Mishkin—had eighteen-year-old STENOGRAPHERS with whom they might have—like Mishkin—fallen MADLY in LOVE!) How old are you, by the way? REALLY? Seventeen? AND a HALF? Why—that is (as you so aptly put it) "Like...cosmic!" Yes, I quite agree! "Oh, Wow!" Indeed! "Oh, Wow!"

Cerebus:
You've been smoking your shag carpet samples again.

Konigsberg:
She's a very *mature* seventeen. *And* a half.

Cerebus:
Nay, Cerebus meant *this* part. Not believing in God, but believing in Rick *and* Cerebus. *Rick* didn't create the heaven and the earth. *Cerebus* didn't create the heaven and the earth. [sighs] If you would just *try* praying to God...

Konigsberg:
I prefer not to arouse the attention of a Being who—*if* He exists—is *potentially* capable of stripping all the water out of my body like... like a *magician yanking* a tablecloth out from under a table full of dishes.

Cerebus:
[turning and looking at Me]

Me:
I showed him some of your preliminary notes. Sorry.

Cerebus:
No problem. [thinks] Cerebus has been meaning to get back to this for a while, but everything's been going so well with everyone reading Cerebus' commentaries on just the *first ten* chapters, Cerebus isn't sure how necessary these other books are. Did you see the fifty-foot razor strop on the way in?

Konigsberg:
The spring-loaded one? On the giant paddlewheel-looking thing? Yeah I did.

Cerebus:
We haven't even had to use it yet. As soon as we got it rigged up these *huge* vegetables started just sort of *bursting* out of the ground.
Okay. Chapter eighteen. Oh, right. Here comes a different *kind* of yoohwhoo, to have a little chat with Abraham. *"And he lift vp his eyes and looked, and loe, three men stood by him."* Okay, so we know that this is a yoohwhoo because there are three of them: He, she and it. *"And they said vnto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. And he said, I will certainly returne vnto thee according to the time of life; and loe Sarah thy wife shall haue a sonne. And Sarah heard in the tent doore, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, and well stricken in age: it ceased to be with Sarah after the manér of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within her selfe, saying, After I am waxed old, shall I haue pleasure, my lord being old also? And the Yoohwhoo said vnto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying shall I of a surety heare a childe which am old?"* See, Yoohwhoo catches Abraham in his lack of faith since—even though *God* told *Abraham* that Sarah is going to have a child—obviously *Abraham hasn't* told *Sarah*. Which probably means that Abraham doesn't believe it's going to happen. *"Is any thing too hard for the Yoohwhoo? At the time appointed will I returne vnto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall haue a sonne."* So, Yoohwhoo gets to irritate God by claiming that she's going to make Sarah pregnant—the "Yoohwhoo crap" that always causes trouble and which led God to introduce his circumcision covenant with the men.

Konigsberg:
How can you keep calling Yoohwhoo "she"? It says three *men* were standing by him.

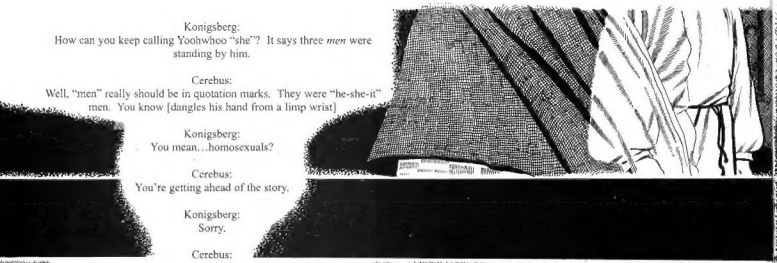
Cerebus:
Well, "men" really should be in quotation marks. They were "he-she-it" men. You know [dangles his hand from a limp wrist].

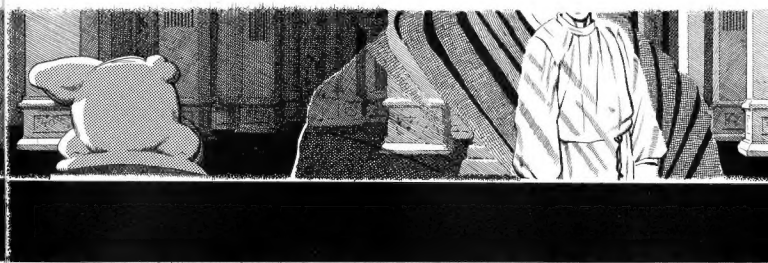
Konigsberg:
You mean…homosexuals?

Cerebus:
You're getting ahead of the story.

Konigsberg:
Sorry.

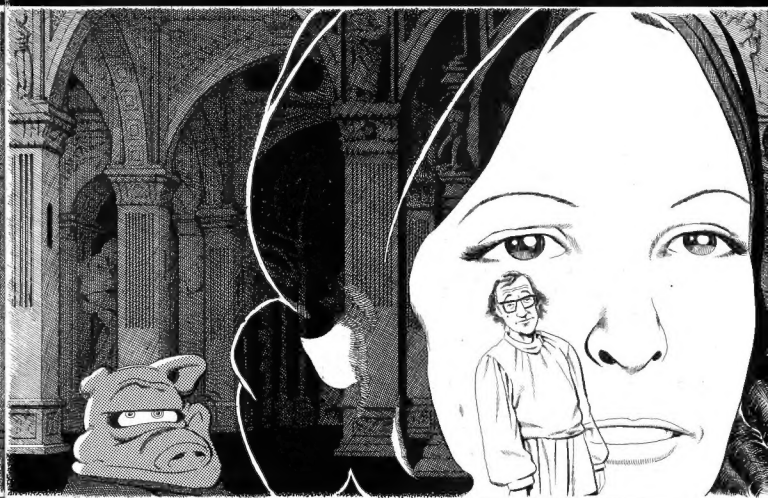
Cerebus:





"And the men rose vp from thence, and looked toward Sodome: and Abraham went with them, to bring them on the way. And the Yoohwhoo said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I doe; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that hee will command his children, and his household after him…" [laughs] Yoohwhoo's *Un*circumcision Covenant: referring to Abraham's "children"—that is, his sons *and* daughters—and "his household" rather than "his seed" or "his son" *"…and they shall keepe the way of the Yoohwhoo, to doe Iustice and Iudgement, that the Yoohwhoo may bring vpon Abraham, that which hee hath spoken of him."* This is "three-'men'-yoohwhoo"s way of letting God know that, even though God has a covenant with Abraham and his seed through *circumcision*, that Yoohwhoo—and her *little* yoohwhoos—still have a pretty good "stake" in Abraham as well. *"And the Yoohwhoo said, Because the cry of Sodome and Gomorrah is great, and because their sinne is very grieuous: I will goe down now, and see whether they haue done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come vnto me: and if not, I will know. And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodome: but Abraham stood yet before the Yoohwhoo."* The next part is kind of funny. [thinks] Again, depending on your sense of humour. Abraham takes the yoohwhoo's "justice and judgement" comment to heart and says, *"Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peraduenture there be fifty righteous within the citie; wilt thou also destroy, and not spare the place for the fiftie righteous, that are therein? That be farre from thee, to do after this maner, to slay the righteous with the wicked, and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be farre from thee: Shall not the Iudge of all the earth doe right?"* [laughs] This is a new one on the little "three-'men'-yoohwhoo" and on Big Yoohwhoo: the idea that the "way of the Yoohwhoo"—having everything done the way Yoohwhoo wants it done—might not be *exactly the same* as "justice and judgement." It's the voice of God speaking through Abraham: *"Shall not the Iudge of all the earth doe right?"* "It's your show, little yoohwhoo. *You* make the call." And then [laughs] Abraham enters into what he *thinks* is a "justice and judgement" negotiation. *"Behold now, I haue taken vpon me to speake vnto the Yoohwhoo, which am but dust and ashes."* Which takes us all the way back to the garden and Yoohwhoo's curse on Adam: *"for dust thou art, and vnto dust shalt thou returne"* just before the Yoohwhoo cast him out of the garden *"to keep the way of the Yoohwhoo"*. So Abraham negotiates: Fifty righteous? Forty righteous? Thirty righteous? Twenty righteous?—all the way down to: *"And hee saide, Oh let not the Yoohwhoo be angry and I will speake yet but once: Peraduenture ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy for tennes sake."* It's funny, see, because this is a little-*yoohwhoo* that Abraham is talking to. *Yoohwhoo* and *ALL* the little yoohwhoos *ALL* believe that *ALL* men are wicked. *That's* the *real* "way of the Yoohwhoo". That was Yoohwhoo's basis for driving Adam out of the garden. From the "Yoohwhoo side of things" [laughs] Abraham would have just as much luck negotiating over *headless* people. "What if there are ten guys walking around down there without heads?? "Okay, if I find ten guys walking around Sodom without heads, I won't destroy the place."

Chapter nineteen. The [dangles his limp wrist] "men" come into Sodom and get invited to spend the night by Lot. And Sodom turns out to be [laughs] just the place for them. *"But before they lay downe, the men of the citie, the men of Sodom, compassed the house*

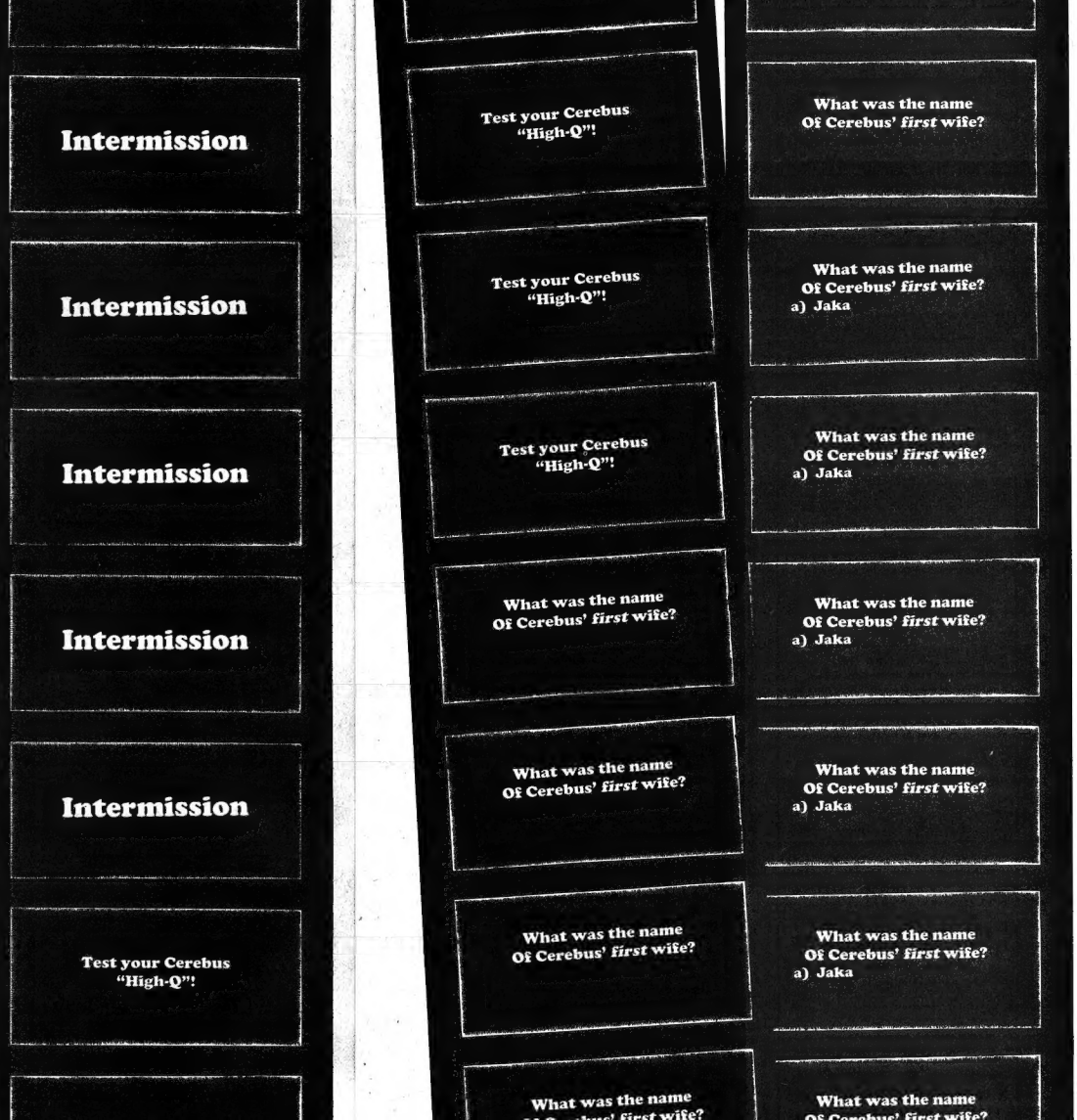


Intermission

round, both old and yong, all the people from euery quarter. And they called vnto Lot, and said vnto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out vnto vs, that we may know them. And Lot went out at the doore vnto them & shut the doore after him..." The door is actually an important part of the story, following on with Yoohwhoo's reference to "the way of the Yoohwhoo" and Abraham's comment about being "dust and ashes" both of which are references that go all the way back to the garden. "*...and said, "I pray you, brethren, doe not so wickedly. Behold now, I haue two daughters, which haue not knowen man; let mee, I pray you, bring them out vnto you, and doe ye to them, as is good in your eyes, onely vnto these men do nothing: for therefore came they vnder the shadow of my roofe.*" [laughs] It's the *opposite* of the "way of the Yoohwhoo". Instead of getting rid of the *men*—as Yoohwhoo did in driving Adam out of the garden—Lot is going to drive out the *women*, his *daughters* and allow them to be raped. Which isn't as bad as murdering Adam by keeping him away from the tree of life, but it's still a long way from "justice and judgement"—which is God's point. Yoohwhoo wouldn't know "justice and judgement" if they came up and bit her on the ass. Part of the crowd of "he-she-it-'men'" yells, "*Stand backe,*" which *would* qualify as "justice and judgement" and part of the crowd of "he-she-it-'men'" yells, "*This one came in to soiourne, and he will needs bee a iudge:*" echoing what Abraham said to the yoohwhoo-who-stayed-behind, about "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" By getting in between the crowd of [dangles his limp wrist] "men" and the two [dangles his limp wrist] "men," Lot puts himself in the position of being the judge over right and wrong, the one who has to come up with a "justice and judgement" way out of the situation. Which is God's way of telling this particular "he-she-it-three-'men'-yoohwhoo," "Hey, it wasn't a rhetorical question: Shall. Not. The. Judge. Of. All. The. Earth. Do. *Right*?" And the yoohwhoo, of course—as all yoohwhoos do—tries to just ignore the question and hope that everything gets better on its own or (because it's what the Yoohwhoo *wants* to have happen) God *fixes* it because, basically, *that's* the "way of the Yoohwhoo". Which, in this case—because *no* decision *is* a decision—tilts the crowd in the direction of doing *wrong*. "*Now wil we deale worse with thee, then with them.*" And this becomes something completely new for Yoohwhoo—the possibility of getting the crap beaten out of her [clears throat] among other things [clears throat] because she has no *clue* as to *what* the *right* thing is to do *even in an environment where* everyone *is a "he-she-it"!* Which is God's point. Yoohwhoo, because of the bad fruit, has "knowledge-of-good-and-evil"—magic, like the cherubims and the flaming sword—but that isn't the same thing as "knowing right from wrong". By trying to be three "he's," Yoohwhoo has just gone back to the Cain and Hebel situation, where *her* solution was for the two of them to become one flesh, to be man and wife. Do well, do it "the way of the Yoohwhoo" or "sin croucheth at the door." Well, here you've got Sodom and Gomorrah, *whole cities* in which all of the "men" *have* become "one flesh," all of the "men" *are* following "the way of the Yoohwhoo" and sin isn't *crouching* at the door anymore. [laughs] Sin is ready to break the door *down*.

"*And they pressed sore vpon the man, Lot, and came neere to breake the doore. But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the doore.*" And Lot/Yoohwhoo *still* doesn't know what to do, *still* doesn't know right from wrong, so that leaves it up to the "he-she-it-'men,'" Yoohwhoo's "angels" to use their knowledge-of-good-and-evil. "*And they smote the men that at the doore of the house, with blindnes, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to finde the doore.*" The "both small and great," Cerebus is willing to bet, refers to the "men" *and* their spirits inside the earth. Blindness to keep the "men" from finding the door but also—like Shem and Japhet covering Noah's nakedness, or like Abraham being a "covering of the eyes" so people didn't see what a tramp Sarai was—attempting to blind everyone's spirit to the fact that Yoohwhoo doesn't know the difference between right and wrong. "*And the men said vnto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? Sonne in law, and thy sonnes, and thy daughters, and whatsoeuer thou hast in the citie, bring out of this place. For we will destroy this place, because the crie of them is waxen great before the face of the Yoohwhoo: and the Yoohwhoo hath sent vs to destroy it.*" *That* results in *another* funny part of the story. [thinks] Again, depending on your sense of humor. Picture these two [dangles his limp wrist] "men" announcing to Lot—who as Lot/Yoohwhoo almost just got killed—that they're about to [waves his limp wrists around] "dethtroy the thity" [we both laugh].

And Lot, now that he's just a guy, just Lot, again, instead of


Intermission
Intermission
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Intermission
Test your Cerebus "High-Q"!
Test your Cerebus "High-Q"!
Test your Cerebus "High-Q"!
Test your Cerebus "High-Q"!
What was the name Of Cerebus' first wife?
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a) Jaka

What was the name Of Cerebus' *first* wife?
a) Jaka b) the Regency Elf

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a) Jaka b) the Regency Elf

What was the name Of Cerebus' *first* wife?
a) Jaka b) the Regency Elf

What was the name Of Cerebus' *first* wife?
a) Jaka b) the Regency Elf
c) Astoria

What was the name Of Cerebus' *first* wife?
a) Jaka b) the Regency Elf
c) Astoria

Lot/Yoohwhoo, *"And Lot went out, and spake vnto his sonnes in law, which married his daughters…"* that is, *actual* men [thinks] men *without* quotation marks [we both laugh] *"…and said,"* [waving his limp wrists around even more and using a mincing voice] *"Vp, get yee out of this place: for the Yoohwhoo wil destroy this citie: but hee seemed as one that mocked, vnto his sonnes in law."* Well, aye. How seriously would *you* take it if a couple of [dangles his limp wrist] "men" told you they were about to destroy your city? *"And when the morning arose, then the Angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, & thy two daughters, which are found, lest thou be consumed in the iniquitie of the citie."* Notice anyone missing?

Konigsberg:
The two sons-in-law.

Cerebus:
[dangling his limp wrist and stamping his foot] [lisping] The big *bitches*. Laugh at the way Yoohwhoo's angels talk, will they? [we both laugh] *"And while he lingred, the men laid hold vpon his hand, and vpon the hand of his wife, and vpon the hand of his two daughters, the Yoohwhoo being merciful vnto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the citie."* More knowledge-of-good and-evil. Obviously, the only one that the local yoohwhoo—or Big Yoohwhoo—*wants* to save is the guy who has been trained to do what all yoohwhoos want done—that is, he mutilates cattle so the blood spills all over the ground so the yoohwhoos can drink it. [thinks] At least now the *numbers* are appropriate for a change: *one* man and *three* women. *"And it came to passe, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life, looke not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plaine: escape to the mountain lest thou bee consumed."* And now God, with God's great sense of humour, God takes over the part of Lot. Why not? *Yoohwhoo* doesn't want to be Lot anymore. *" And Lot said vnto them, Oh not so, my Yoohwhoo. Beholde now, thy seruant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou has showed vnto me, in sauing my life, and I cannot escape to the mountaine, lest some euill take me, and I die."* God's little joke at Yoohwhoo, since Yoohwhoo basically *is* the mountain. *"Behold now, this citie is neere to flee vnto, and it is a litle one: Oh let me escape thither, (is it not a litle one?) and my soule shall liue."* It's hard to tell if Yoohwhoo catches the reference—that God is suggesting that the story should end the same way the Cain and Hebel story ended, where God-as-Cain was driven out from the face of the earth and built a city to live in. This time, Lot has a city right there ready for him. Only *this* time, even when he is given a choice between living in a city or in—or *on*—the Yoohwhoo, he *chooses* the city.

And Yoohwhoo...Yoohwhoo is [thinks] basically, Yoohwhoo is a sucker for anything that makes her *feel* like God. Things like God-as-Lot complimenting her on "magnifying her mercy" which, of course, God-as-Lot is only half-serious about. Saving four people out of all of the cities of the plain—for Yoohwhoo—*does* represent "magnifying her mercy" but only because, up to that point, [laughs] Yoohwhoo hasn't had *any* mercy. But Yoohwhoo—realizing that a reliable cattle mutilator is a reliable cattle mutilator—takes Lot's groveling and compliments at face value: *"See I haue accepted thy face concerning this thing, that I will not ouerthrow this citie, for the which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither: for I cannot doe any thing till thou bee come thither."* [laughs] Well. *That* was certainly true: Yoohwhoo *can't* do anything until after Lot "comes thither". Or even *after* Lot "comes thither". On her own? All *Yoohwhoo* could do would be to grow some really scary herbs [we both laugh]. *"The sunne was gone forth vpon the earth, when Lot entred into Zoar. Then the Yoohwhoo rained vpon Sodome & vpon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire, from the Yoohwhoo out of heauen. And he ouerthrew those cities, and all the plaine, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew vpon the ground."* Which, of course, was God's doing, not Yoohwhoo's. You'll notice that God was careful to destroy "that which grew upon the ground". If he's going to destroy whole cities to satisfy the local yoohwhoo's whim, he isn't going to leave any of Yoohwhoo's grass and herbs and fruits out of the deal. [reads] Then Yoohwhoo, like Lot's wife—as a *female*, that is—can't resist "looking back from behind him". Why? Simple. Because she was told *not* to. It's another reference to the garden, with God reinforcing His lesson from the garden that a woman, more often than not, is going to disobey when you tell her not to do something. It's, like, their primary job skill. *"But his wife looked backe from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."* Lot's wife looks back from behind Lot in the *physical* world the same way that the trouble-making "three-'man'-little-yoohwhoo" looks back from behind God.

Konigsberg:
I've never understood that part. Why a pillar of salt?

Cerebus:
There were two *he's*—the "men," yoohwhoo's "angels"—and, ultimately, two *she's*—Lot's daughters. Which meant that there were two "its" missing from the story. The two "its" were God's big surprise in the story. The two "its" were water and salt. When Lot's wife disobeyed orders, God just *wrenched* all of the water out of her.

Konigsberg:
Oh. *This* is the part about the magician who can pull a tablecloth out from under a table full of dishes without the dishes moving.

Cerebus:
Aye. See if you strip all of the water out of a human being all you're left with is…

Konigsberg:
Salt.

Cerebus:
Exactly. It's a threat *and* a reminder to Yoohwhoo. God is pointing out that there are a lot of things—even with her "knowledge of good-and-evil"—that Yoohwhoo *doesn't* know. One of those, is that people are basically made up of water and salt. Another thing that Yoohwhoo doesn't know is how to *take* all the water out of a person so that nothing is *left* but a "pillar of salt". See, when Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt by having all the water taken out of her, Cerebus is willing to bet that the same thing happened on the "spirit" side of things—inside the earth—to the little yoohwhoo-of-the-plains. The little yoohwhoo-that-Sodom-and-Gomorrah-were-built-on.

Something important that a yoohwhoo needs to be a *living* yoohwhoo—the way that a human being needs lots of water to be a *living* human being—was taken out of her by God [snaps his fingers so loudly that Konigsberg and I jump] *like THAT!* So that all that was left of her was *half* of what she needed to be a *living* little yoohwhoo. So—before Big Yoohwhoo's eyes, inside the earth, the little yoohwhoo [laughs] became a *dead* little yoohwhoo. See, Cerebus is willing to bet that this little-yoohwhoo-of-the-plains—which had separated from the Big Yoohwhoo and who appeared to Abraham in the form of three "men," who was, that is, Big Yoohwhoo's idea of an "all-male" yoohwhoo—was the yoohwhoo who came up with the bright idea of telling God that she wanted him to rain fire and brimstone on the cities of the plain. *Her* bright idea being: If Big Yoohwhoo *is* actually in charge because men are calling on the name of the Yoohwhoo, then shouldn't God be willing to *punish* the wickedness of men the way *each little* yoohwhoo *wants* the men of her own little-yoohwhoo-district punished? So God demonstrates that He is more than happy to make things happen as Yoohwhoo—or any of the little yoohwhoos separated from her—picture them, even up to the point of destroying with fire and brimstone what the yoohwhoo-of-the-plain sees as her own "wicked" cities. But in the process, God removes half of the two "its" that a yoohwhoo needs to be alive and reduces the yoohwhoo who came up with the idea to a little pile of salt. Which, undoubtedly, [laughs] scared Big Yoohwhoo pretty good, since she has no idea if God can do the same thing to her [thinks] which, Cerebus is willing to bet, God *can*. And which [laughs] no doubt cut down on the number of yoohwhoos—all of whom are just staring at this little pillar of salt where the yoohwhoo-of-the-plains *used* to be—who might be tempted to come up with… *similar*… bright ideas in their little yoohwhoo districts for…for…uh…

Konigsberg:
Wide-scale arbitrary genocide?

Cerebus:
Aye. Exactly. "Wide-sail actuarial jealocide" [*Cerebus: I usually fix these, but I decided to leave this one – Me*] God makes a very, very strong point that "actuarial jealocide" can cut both ways. So God plays along. But!

God plays along *only up to a point*. As an example, He doesn't save Zoar when Yoohwhoo promises Lot that Zoar will be spared.

What was the name Of Cerebus' *first* wife?
a) Jaka b) the Regency Elf
c) Astoria

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c) Astoria

What was the name Of Cerebus' *first* wife?
a) Jaka b) the Regency Elf
c) Astoria d) Red Sophia

What was the name Of Cerebus' *first* wife?
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What was the name

c) Astoria d) Red Sophia

What was the name Of Cerebus' *first* wife?
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c) Astoria d) Red Sophia

Clue #1! "No 'jacking off'"
a) Jaka b) the Regency Elf
c) Astoria d) Red Sophia

Clue #1! "No 'jacking off'"
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Yoohwhoo decides to save *four* people but God decides that only *three* of the four are going to make it, because He knows that the *one* of the four that most closely resembles Yoohwhoo—Lot's wife—*like* Yoohwhoo, won't choose to obey a simple instruction even if her *life* depends on it [laughs] which, in this case, it *did*. Which leaves one male and two females, just like the she-goat, the ram and the heifer of Yoohwhoo's covenant with Abraham. Only in this case, because Lot—in the role of Yoohwhoo—was willing to cast out his daughters—the she-goat and the heifer—that means Yoohwhoo is left only with the ram. So, God, having taken the role of Lot (the role that Yoohwhoo doesn't want anymore) now assumes dominion over the daughters, the she-goat and the heifer that Yoohwhoo cast out when *she* was being Lot. Which is God's way of telling Yoohwhoo that this is a much more apt model of how things are than Yoohwhoo's "She-Goat God," "Ram-God" and the "Great Heifer in Heaven" *and* a more apt model than dead-pillar-of-salt-of-the-cities-of-the-plain-yoohwhoo's "Three He-She-Its-Who-Are-Actually-Men-with-Quotation-Marks". The apt model, God is pointing out, is: God *with* two little yoohwhoos—like Abraham *with* Sarah and Hagar. God *with* the regional-yoohwhoo-with-the-garden and the bigger-Egyptian-yoohwhoo-up-ahead. And—since Big Yoohwhoo and the other little regional yoohwhoos show no evidence of wanting to push their luck, pillar-of-salt-wise [laughs]—that's the model that Yoohwhoo and all the little yoohwhoos agree to stick with for the time being. [reading the text] And, as it turns out, the two *human* little yoohwhoos in the story, Lot's daughters, both think—just like the regional yoohwhoo-with-the-garden did after the flood—that the *whole world* was destroyed in the overthrow of the cities of the plain. And then, Lot's daughters fulfill Lot's premonition that he *"cannot escape to the mountaine, lest some euill take me, and I die." "And the first-born saide vnto the yonger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth, to come in vnto us, after the maner of all the earth. Come, let vs make our father drinke wine, and we will lye with him, that we many preserue seed of our father."* God's way of telling Yoohwhoo that this is how life *actually* works. Women. Don't. Have. A. Seed. Women "preserve seed" of men. [thinks] Which is a much *nicer* way of saying it than *Cerebus'* way of saying it: "women are just the box the seed grows in," but, then, God is much nicer than Cerebus. *"And they made their father drinke wine that night, & the first borne went in, and lay with her father: and he perceiued not, when shee lay downe, nor when she arose."* And then the younger of the two does the same thing the next night. So both of Lot's daughters get pregnant by their father. "He perceived not, when she lay down, nor when she arose"? Cerebus doesn't know *who* is kidding *who* here, but that [thinks] *that* just isn't *possible*. If you were so drunk that you didn't know when she lay down…

Konigsberg:
You wouldn't be able to…be able to…uh

Cerebus:
Exactly. So, anyway, Lot's daughters give birth to the Moabites and the Ammonites. His daughters must've been awfully embarrassed when they came down from that cave and found out that the whole world *hadn't* been destroyed—embarrassed enough, Cerebus is willing to bet, that they probably told their father that *Yoohwhoo* got them both pregnant [we all laugh]. And Lot was probably happy to go along with it. *"Yoohwhoo* got you pregnant? Let's celebrate by mutilating a cow! Glory to the Yoohwhoo!" Chapter twenty? Chapter twenty is the Abimelech chapter with Sarah-the-tramp which we already talked about. It belongs back around chapter fourteen when she was still *Sarai*-the-tramp. Chapter twenty-one picks up with Yoohwhoo taking credit for getting Sarah pregnant. *"And the Yoohwhoo visited Sarah as he had said, and the Yoohwhoo did vnto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceiued and bare Abraham a sonne in his old age, at the set time."* And then, tacked onto the end, a little bit of truth: *"of which God had spoken to him." "And Abraham was a hundred yeeres old, when his sonne Isaac was borne vnto him. And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, all that heare, will laugh with me."* Which, you have to be careful when you say things like that out loud [laughs] when you're representing Yoohwhoo in a story: *"And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast, the day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the sonne of Hagar the Egyptian, which shee had borne vnto Abraham, mocking."* Ishmael fulfills Sarah's words by laughing, but it isn't the *kind* of laughing Sarah was talking about. *"Wherefore she said vnto Abraham, cast out this bond woman, and her sonne: for the sonne of this bond woman shall not be heire with my sonne, with Isaac."* So, Yoohwhoo has to be pretty pleased with *that*: Sarah calling Isaac "*my* son"—not "*our* son," "*my* son"—and calling Ishmael "the son of this bond woman". It's a totally female world, just like in the garden. Only now, the women are casting *each other* out. *"And the thing was very grieuous in Abraham's sight, because of his sonne. And God said vnto Abraham, Let it not be grieuous in thy sight, because of the lad, and because of thy bond woman. In all that Sarah hath said vnto thee, hearken vnto her voice: for in Isaac shall thy seed be called."* God takes the opposite approach that Yoohwhoo took with Adam and Hawwa, when she cursed Adam for hearkening unto the voice of his wife. Heck, no, God says. Go ahead and do everything that Sarah tells you to do. Everything will turn out fine. Again, Yoohwhoo must've smelled a rat. But what's she going to do? So far, God is pretty much going along with everything Yoohwhoo wants done and God tells *Abraham* to do everything *Sarah* tells *him* to do. What has Yoohwhoo got to complain about? Not that that ever stops a woman, of course. So Abraham casts out Hagar and the child with some bread and a bottle of water. *"And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child vnder one of the shrubs. And she went, and sate her downe ouer against, a good way off, as it were a bow shoot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And shee sate ouer against, and lift vp her voice, and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad, and the Angel of God called to Hagar out of heauen, and said vnto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? Feare not: for God hath heard the voice of the ladde, where he is. Arise, lift vp the lad, and hold him in thine hand: for I will make him a great nation."* See, *this* is what Yoohwhoo should've been worried about. Yoohwhoo's Angel was the only one who had a relationship with Hagar to that point, a relationship which started when Hagar fled from Sarai. Remember? Hagar represented Yoohwhoo's Egyptian plan. But, with the birth of Isaac, Yoohwhoo lost track of the plot and got rid of Hagar again, figuring she didn't need her anymore. Which then allowed God to create his own "Angel" to look after Hagar and Ishmael. *"And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water, and shee went, and filled the bottle with water, and gaue the lad drinke."* Just to show how important this is to God, he doesn't just give her water, he "opens" Hagar's eyes. The first time that phrase has been used since Adam and Hawwa ate the bad fruit. So now, Yoohwhoo and God are on the same side again! Yoohwhoo and God *both* have a covenant with Abraham and Isaac and Yoohwhoo's Angel and God's Angel both have a covenant with Ishmael. *"And it came to passe at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chiefe captaine of his hoste spake vnto Abraham saying, God with thee in all that thou doest. Now therefore sweare vnto mee here by God, that thou wilt not deale falsly with me, nor with my sonne, nor with my sonnes sonne: according to the kindnesse that I haue done vnto thee, thou shalt doe vnto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. And Abraham saide, I will sweare."* Abimelech plays the same role that Melchizedek did earlier of representing God. God and the Angel of God who "opened" Hagar's eyes represented by Abimelech and Phicol. Only, this time instead of giving Abraham a chance to hand God's blessing over to Yoohwhoo—like he did with Melchizedek—God just makes it a very basic verbal commitment on Abraham's part: to swear not to deal falsely with Abimelech—and also, *God*, who Abimelech *represents*. Or with Abimelech's sons, Abimelech's sons' sons, and the *land*. That is, to not deal falsely with Yoohwhoo. Which Abraham swears to abide by. Which, when you think about all the grief Yoohwhoo's trying to give God, was pretty nice of God to include her. Which, of course, doesn't stop Yoohwhoo, speaking through Abraham, from dredging up an unrelated dispute just so she has something to complain about. *"And Abraham reproued Abimelech, because of a well of water, which Abimelechs seruants had violently taken away."* Yoohwhoo wants to make a big deal out of the water that was "violently taken away" from Lot's wife—and the regional-yoohwhoo-of-the-plains—leaving her a pillar of salt. *"And Abimelech saide, I wote not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to day."* Abraham was probably wondering what the hell he was talking about, too, since Yoohwhoo was speaking through him about a completely unrelated matter that happened to someone else in another country. "A well of water taken violently away? *What* well of water?" Just to make sure that God knows that Yoohwhoo still claims her stake in Abraham, she has Abraham go through

c) Astoria d) Red Sophia

Clue #2! "Dust the Pixie"
b) the Regency Elf
c) Astoria d) Red Sophia

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c) Astoria d) Red Sophia

Clue #3! "'Misses' Lord Julius"
c) Astoria d) Red Sophia

Clue #3! "'Misses' Lord Julius"

c) Astoria d) Red Sophia

Clue #3! "'Misses' Lord Julius"

c) Astoria d) Red Sophia

Clue #3! "'Misses' Lord Julius"

c) Astoria d) Red Sophia

Clue #3! "'Misses' Lord Julius"

c) Astoria d) Red Sophia

Clue #4! "There's only one left, you moron."

d) Red Sophia

Clue #4! "There's only one left, you moron."

d) Red Sophia

Clue #4! "There's only one left, you moron."

d) Red Sophia

Clue #4! "There's only one left, you moron."

d) Red Sophia

Clue #4! "There's only one

another strange ritual. *"And Abraham tooke sheepe and oxen, and gaue them vnto Abimelech: and both of them made a couenant. And Abraham set seuen ewe lambs of the flocke by themselues. And Abimelech said vnto Abraham, what meane these seuen ewe lambes, which thou has set by themselues? And he said, For these seuen ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witnesse vnto me, that I haue digged this well."* So Abraham swears by God, but then makes a covenant that's [laughs] witnessed by seven female sheep. Yoohwhoo reminding God that Abraham and his seed are still mutilating cattle which are off-limits, taboo, "by themselves". Cerebus is willing to bet that that was the first time that Abimelech had ever had *sheep* as legal witnesses to one of his covenant agreements. Seven is Yoohwhoo's number, since she's the one who came up with the seventh day when God "rested". *"Wherefore he called the name of that place, Beer-sheba: because there they sware both of them."* Beer-sheba, "the well of the oath". Seven female sheep witnessing that a well of water had been taken violently away. *"Thus they made a covenant at Beer-sheba: then Abimelech rose vp, and Phichol the chiefe captaine of his hoste, and they returned into the land of the Philistines. And planted a tree in Beer-sheba, and called there on the Name of the Yoohwhoo, the euerlasting God."* So even Abimelech and Phichol—who just finished representing God and the Angel of God—end up planting a tree and calling on the name of the Yoohwhoo. So Yoohwhoo doesn't come out *ahead* like she did with Melchizedek, but, so far, she is definitely matching God point for point. [laughs] Except for one of her yoohwhoos, one of her "angels" being reduced to a little pile of salt. Cerebus thinks we can put that one in the "win" column for God.

Okay, and that brings us to chapter twenty-two. [thinks] As *Cerebus* reads chapter twenty-two [thinks] now that Hagar and Ishmael are gone and its just Abraham and Sarah and Isaac, you just *know* that Yoohwhoo is going to lose interest in Sarah—who is actually the most like Yoohwhoo in the story [thinks] which is *probably* why Yoohwhoo loses interest in her—and start sniffing around for another "bright idea" about what's going on. And, of course, the "bright idea" that she comes up with *next* is that either Yoohwhoo is Abraham and God is Isaac or Yoohwhoo is Isaac and God is Abraham. That is, either Yoohwhoo is the *son of God* or God is the *son of Yoohwhoo*. *"And it came to passe after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said vnto him, Abraham. And hee said, Behold me. And he said, Take now thy sonne, thine onely Isaac, whom thou louest..."* That's what gave Cerebus the first clue: God mentioning that Abraham loves Isaac, like, you know [laughs] Abraham has to be *told* that. See, Yoohwhoo loves God and still wants to become "one flesh" with God [thinks] and Yoohwhoo wants to think that God loves Yoohwhoo, so, as far as *Yoohwhoo* is concerned, that was a *great* way to start a story. Yoohwhoo can't wait to find out what happens next. *"...and get thee into the land of Moriah: and offer him there for a burnt offering vpon one of the Mountaines which I will tell thee of."* Suddenly? As far as Yoohwhoo is concerned? Suddenly, this is now a *not*-so-great story. *God* is willing to make *Yoohwhoo* into a *burnt offering*? Or God thinks *Yoohwoo* would make *God* into a burnt offering? This is *way* more personal than what happened to Cain, *way* more personal than when Cain said that "everyone that findeth me will slay me" in the earth. This isn't someone who *represents* God talking about what *all the little yoohwhoos* are going to do to *his* spirit in the *earth*. This is *God*, straight out, telling the one who represents *Him* in the story to *kill* the one who represents Yoohwhoo. *"And Abraham rose vp earely in the morning, and sadled his asse, and tooke two of his yong men with him, and Isaac his sonne, and claue the wood for the burnt offering, and rose vp, and went vnto the place of which God had told him."* With the *two* young men, it even has the right numbers: the three that represent Yoohwhoo and the one that represents God. *"Then on the third day Abraham lift vp his eyes, and saw the place afarre off."* Cerebus had to laugh about that part. God doesn't tell Abraham to just take Isaac "out back" or "a mile away" and kill him. No, God tells Abraham about a place that's *three days' journey* away and gives Yoohwhoo *three days* to think about what's about to happen. *"And Abraham said vnto his yong men, Abide you here with the asse, and I and the lad will goe yonder and worship, and come againe to you."* The ass comes back in later on, because Yoohwhoo misses the joke this time and God always repeats his jokes until Yoohwhoo "gets" them. The joke that Yoohwhoo misses here is that God, in the role of Abraham, is saying that the *two young men and the ass* are the three-in-one Yoohwhoo in this particular chapter—see, God is referring back to Sodom, when Yoohwhoo took the part of Lot and, trying to be a Judge of right and wrong [laughs] made an ass of herself and the two young "men" had to bail her out by blinding everyone and their spirits. Which worked on everyone—except God, of course. Where was Cerebus, again?

Me:
"and I and the lad will goe yonder and worship, and come againe to you."

Cerebus:
Right, right, right. See, Yoohwhoo is still thinking that *Isaac* and *Abraham* are *God* and *Yoohwhoo* in the story. But, Cerebus is pretty sure that what God is doing is "*leaving the actual Yoohwhoo*—the two young men and the ass—*behind*" so that God can show Yoohwhoo that God is God, God is Abraham and Isaac is a "separated part of Abraham"—Abraham's seed. What God wants to show Yoohwhoo is that God tells Abraham what to do and Abraham does it. Abraham tells Isaac what to do and Isaac does it. What God is saying is that *this is how Yoohwhoo should be*. Yoohwhoo should ask God what God wants Yoohwhoo to do and Yoohwhoo should do it, instead of wasting all her time trying to come up with all these "bright ideas" of how Yoohwhoo is actually God or Yoohwhoo and God are *both* gods or Yoohwhoo is God's uncle-god or Yoohwhoo is God's half-sister-god and then telling God that He has to make everything fit Yoohwhoo's *new* "bright idea" *just* because men have made a mistake and are "calling on the name of the Yoohwhoo." Where was Cerebus, again?

Me:
"and I and the lad will goe yonder and worship and come againe to you."

Cerebus:
Right, right, right. So, at that point, Yoohwhoo really must've been wondering: "I *and the lad* will come again to you?" or "*I* will come again to you?" You know, is the "fix" in? Does Abraham know that this is just a gag? *"And Abraham tooke the wood of the burnt offering, and layd it vpon Isaac his sonne: and he tooke the fire in his hand, and a knife: and they went both of them together."* God *can't* be serious, Yoohwhoo must've been thinking for three days. It's just some kind of weird joke. But, God is *completely* serious. He wants to show Yoohwhoo what real faith in God is. And God knows that Abraham *has real faith* in God. *"And Isaac spake vnto Abraham his father, and said, My father. And he said, Behold me, my sonne."* Which *really* must've given Yoohwhoo the willies, because that's *just* what Abraham said to *God* when *God* called to him: "Behold me." You can bet that Yoohwhoo was "beholding" like *crazy* at this point. What am I beholding? *What am I beholding? "And hee said, Behold the fire and the wood..."* Remember that the fire is a Yoohwhoo-thing, a "light" and a tree is a God-thing, a "he," so they're *both* in this, they're both part of the sacrifice. [laughs] Cerebus is willing to bet that if Yoohwhoo "beheld" any *harder*, Yoohwhoo's eyes would have *jumped right out of her head* at this point. *"...but where is the lambe for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My sonne, God will prouide himselfe a lambe for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together."* OH NO! Yoohwhoo must've thought. This is payback time for my encouraging men to slaughter all those cattle! God is going to cut my throat and burn me alive! Or God is saying that by encouraging men to slaughter all those cattle, that I've been cutting *God's* throat and burning *God* alive—all this time, *God* has been providing *Himself* as a burnt offering! When what God is saying is that Abraham, unlike Yoohwhoo, has real faith in God. And then comes the *next* part: *"And they came to the place which God had tolde him of, and Abraham built an Altar there, and layd the wood in order, and bound Isaac his sonne, and layde him on the Altar vpon the wood. And Abraham stretched foorth his hand, and tooke the knife to slay his sonne."* God is making the even *larger* point that *Isaac, too*, has *real faith* in God, *and real faith* in Abraham. Isaac doesn't *scream*, he doesn't try to *run away*. He just lets Abraham tie him up and lay him down on the wood. Isaac *knows* what happens next, he's seen it happen *too many times* with *too many lambs* sacrificed *to Yoohwhoo not* to know what's coming next. Abraham, his father, *is going to cut his throat*. Abraham isn't hesitating and Isaac isn't batting an eye. At that point, it all becomes too much for Yoohwhoo. *"And the Angel of the Yoohwhoo called vnto him out of heauen and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here am I."*

d) Red Sophia

Clue #4! "There's only one left, you moron."

d) Red Sophia

Time's Up!

d) Red Sophia

Time's Up!

d) Red Sophia

Time's Up!

d) Red Sophia

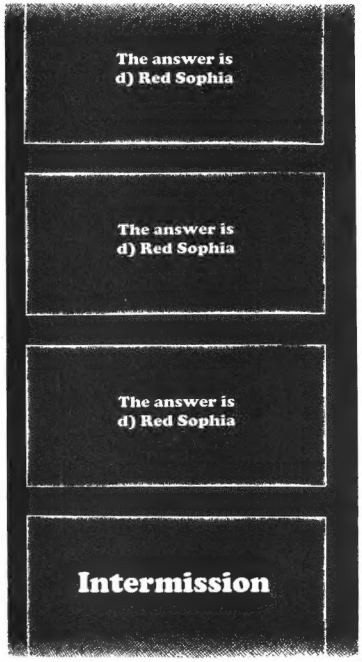
Time's Up!

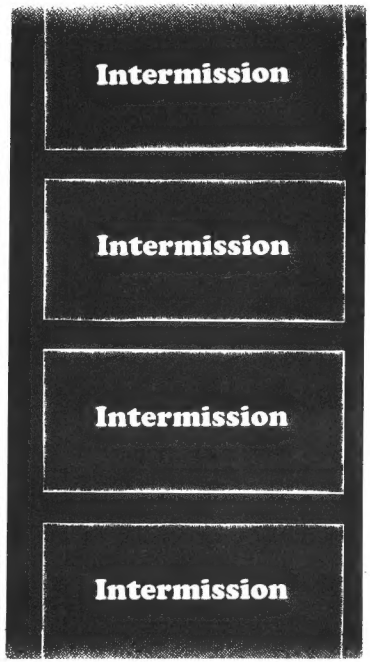
d) Red Sophia

Time's Up!

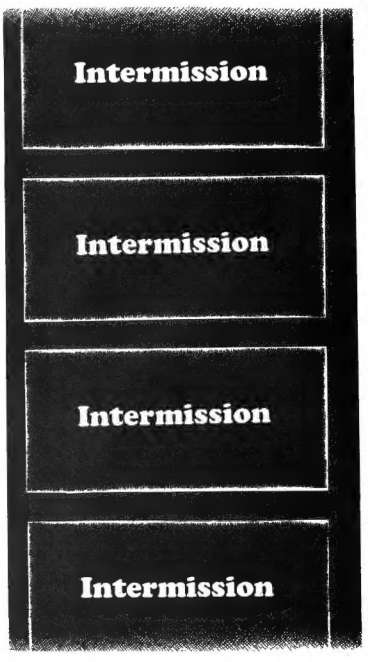
d) Red Sophia

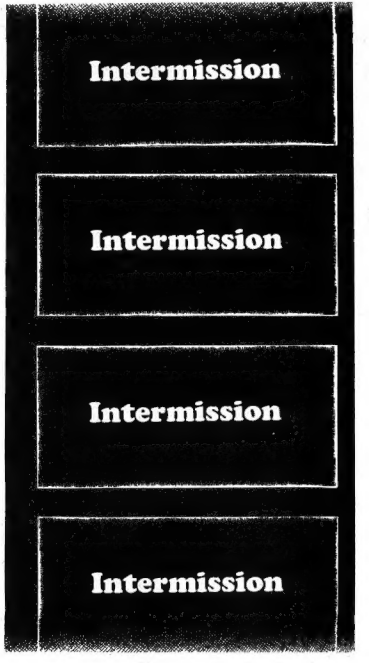
Time's Up!





Notice, "here am I" not "behold me". He's just Abraham again. *"And he said, Lay not thine hand vpon the lad, neither do thou any thing vnto him: for now I know that thou fear God, seeing thou has not withheldе thy sonne, thine onely sonne from mee."* Which is really, really funny. Basically, Yoohwhoo cracks under the pressure and God doesn't. *Yoohwhoo* is the one who has *her* angel stop Abraham—and then tries to cover up for the fact that she was the one who cracked by making it sound as if Abraham's *faith IN God* was *fear OF God and* by pretending that Abraham was sacrificing Isaac to *her*. [laughs] She was certain, right up to the moment when Abraham picked up the knife, that *God* would stop the sacrifice, that *God* couldn't bear to watch Himself-as-Yoohwhoo's-son or Yoohwhoo-as-God's-son be sacrificed in cold blood. And she gets so absorbed in thinking that she's watching God and Yoohwhoo that she even forgets *completely* about Ishmael and calls Isaac Abraham's "only son" which is what she now thinks of herself as, God's only son—or God as *her* only son. *"And Abraham lifted vp his eyes, and looked, and beholde, behind a Ramme caught in a thicket by his hornes."* See, it turns out that God was just putting the finishing touches on the story of Lot and his two daughters—remember, where Lot's wife got stripped down to a pillar of salt so that God-as-Lot gets complete control of the two daughters—the she-goat and the heifer—when Yoohwhoo-as-Lot screws up at the door? Yoohwhoo has forgotten all about the *other* one of the three animals in her covenant sacrifice with Abraham: the Ram. But *God* hasn't. See? There the Ram is, *behind* Abraham, the way Lot's wife was *behind* Lot. *Because* Yoohwhoo just couldn't face God sacrificing Yoohwhoo-as-God's son or Yoohwhoo sacrificing God-as-Yoohwhoo's son, God proves He's more of a "Ram" than Yoohwhoo is. A "Ram" could watch without interfering, a "she-goat" or a "heifer" couldn't. So an actual ram ends up caught by his horns in a *thicket*—the *thorns* and *thistles* that are Yoohwhoo's, the earth's, actual "sons," *the thorns and thistles* which were part of Yoohwhoo's punishment for men way, way back in the garden. The Ram is Yoohwhoo's Ram caught by her own thicket. Abraham said that "God would provide himself a *lamb* for the burnt offering." And, instead, God provides the *father* of a lamb—a *ram*—for a burnt offering. So, God is expressing his willingness to go along with Yoohwhoo's God-and-Yoohwhoo/father-and-son or Yoohwhoo-and-God/father-and-son "bright idea" for a while—now that Yoohwhoo's lost interest in the the-ram-the-she-goat-and-the-heifer/God-and-the-two-yoohwhoos/Abraham-Sarah-and-Hagar story. Yoohwhoo probably doesn't realize exactly *how* God did it, but God beat Yoohwhoo cold in this one, boy. Which reinforces God's lesson a) that God is the Ram, and the two little yoohwhoos are the she-goat and the heifer, which was Yoohwhoo's "bright idea" when she thought the heifer was in control and b) Abraham and Isaac are better than Yoohwhoo, in the eyes of God because they have faith in God and they obey God. Unlike certain "living things in the earth" which shall be nameless. [bends down to read the rest of the chapter] And *then*, of





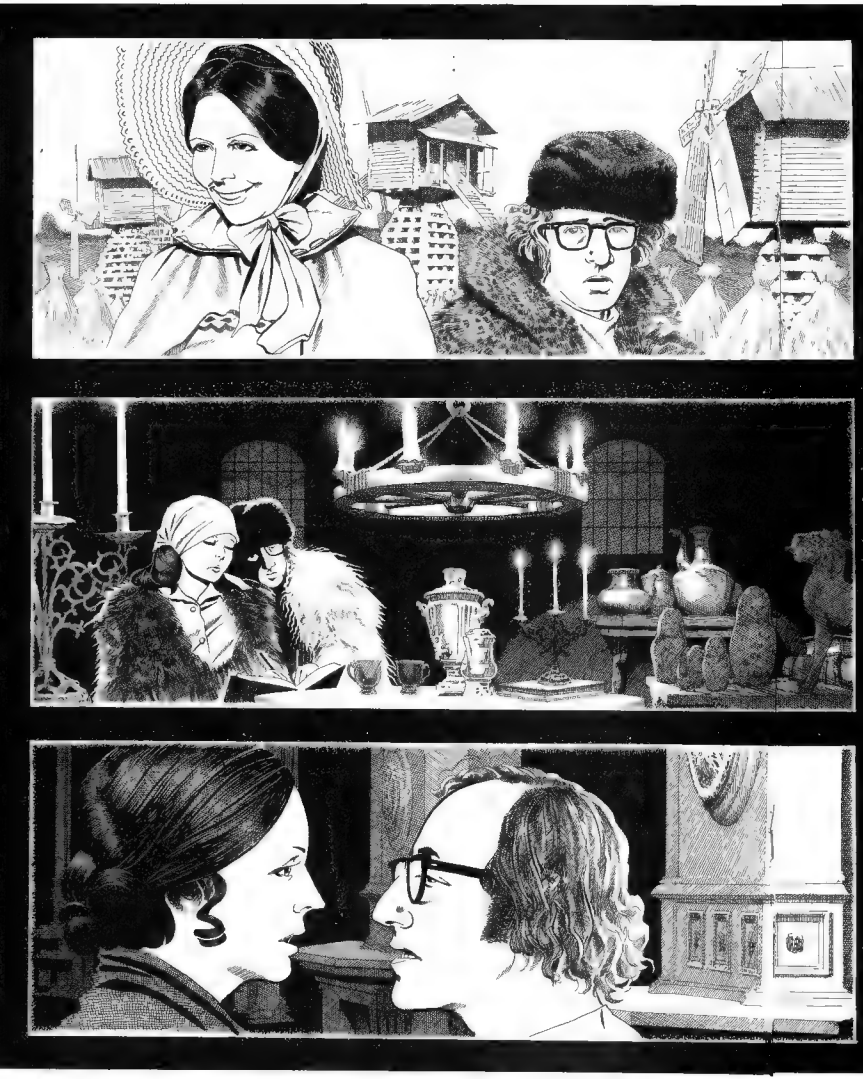
course, Yoohwhoo spends the rest of the chapter telling Abraham how she is going to multiply his seed, blah blah blah, like the sand on the sea lip, blah blah blah, because he was so obedient, blah blah blah and oh, look at all of Abraham's relatives who are having babies, blah blah blah like Milcah bearing children unto Abraham's brother Nahor—note, *children*, not *sons* and, of course, "the way of the Yoohwhoo": Yoohwhoo mentions the mother before the father—just like Yoohwhoo *promised* they would blah blah blah. So Yoohwhoo doesn't learn a thing, and all God can do is wait for her next "bright idea". You know, some day [thinks a long time] *somebody* [thinks a long time] is going to die in a really, really bad way because of *this* "bright idea".

Konigsberg:
How do you mean?

Cerebus:
Well, it's probably going to take a *while*, but this *is Yoohwhoo* we're talking about. *Someday* she's going to want to prove that she's just as much of a Ram as God is. *Someday* she's going to want God to set up *another* sacrifice—just like this one—and then *she's* not going to have her angel stop it, she's just going to stand back and watch and see if *God* will *actually* go through with it, see if God will actually watch someone who represents Yoohwhoo's son or God's son *actually* get his throat cut and burned alive [thinks] or, knowing Yoohwhoo, probably something even *more* gruesome.

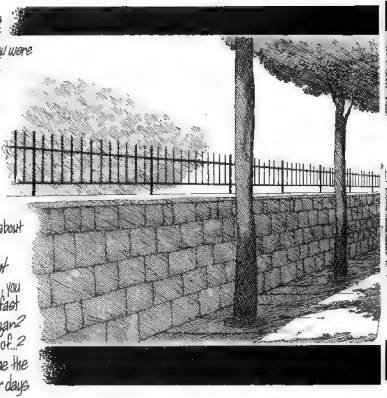
Konigsberg:
There's a cheerful thought.

Cerebus:
You've probably noticed by now that "Yoohwhoo" and "cheerful thoughts" don't really *go* together.



25th of Steve, TT- Are you sure it doesn't bother you that I'm writing in your diary like this? Bother me? No, no. It was MY idea, remember? I was the one who said, "Maybe it would be easier to keep track of our ...discussions... if we WROTE DOWN what we wanted to say! But what about when I just grab the diary out of your hands before you've even finished writing, like I did just now because I wanted to know why you underlined "discussions"? That bothers you, doesn't it? Oh, no - not at all, I've always admired your strength and and your determination and ar Oh, come ON, it does, too, bother you. Look! You're getting that nervous tic in your right eye. Why can't you just admit that it bothers you? I underlined "discussions" because because our our discussions are are so important to me. Really? Oh, of course. I I should have should have CAPITALIZED it like like like. DISCUSSIONS with with an exclamation - no! - with THREE EXCLAMATION marks!!! OUR!!! DISCUSSIONS!!! Awwwww That's so so nice They're important to me too. Do you really think this is helping, though? Oh, of course, of course it's helping. Really? You're not just writing that? Really. I'm not just writing that. The two of us writing in your diary is helping you more than Sigmund Freud did? Are you kidding? This is helping, me a million, a billion, a BAZILLION times more than Freud. Really? You're not just writing that? Noooo. Not at all! Since you came along, I'm a lot better. Before? The the smallest upset in my life would would make me write all in capitals and and and underline everything, and and and use way too many exclamation marks. But but now I I write everything, in this this really really quiet and whiny and nasal monotone. That's so, so amazing. That's the way I write everything, now, too. In a really quiet and whiny and nasal monotone. See? That's why everything is better now. Why? Why? Well, well because we've we've both become quieter and and whinier and and more nasal and and monotonous. Monotonous. You mean, we're boring. Nonono. I never said that. Where did I say "boring"? This is why I wanted us to write everything down, so that we have a a record. MONOTONOUS (mə-not-ə-nəs) adj: Tiresome by reason of monotony and lack of variety. What - you're going to accept a dictionary's definition over mine? Who are you going out with? Me? Or Funk & Wagnall. But, it's true, isn't it. We have become monotonous. We never go out anywhere. We never meet any new people, we just eat here night after night quietly, nasally whining at each other in your diary. Our diary. Only in the last few pages. The last few pages. Are you kidding? We've filled more pages in the last month than I filled in the previous nine years on my own. If we meet any new people, we're going to need a much bigger book and and different-coloured ink pens. Oh, oh, I see. So what is it that you're writing? That that I'm this this big, BUBBERPEN, is that it? Jeez, no - not at all. Really. There's there's no need for you to to to go all-to capitals on me. We've filled a lot of pages, sure but but but look at the progress we've made. Do you really think we've made progress, really and truly, you're not just writing that? Noooo. I dooo. Why do you aaaask? Well because I'm tired of living, like a Tanchyan CAREFUL! The T.P.A.O.S.A. a. M.T.a.C.W. o.E are everywhere! pt*sant and I'm tired of eating beets for breakfast, lunch and dinner. What? What - even my borscht soufflé? You always said you loved my borscht soufflé. Ohhhhh I dooo, I doo love your borscht-soufflé, but... but But... but... what? A soufflé really has to have, you know, beaten egg whites in it - you can't just whip hot borscht until its all frothy and call it. I can't believe what I'm reading, here. Ohhhh. Now I've hurt your feelings. Nonono. Please. Go on. What else? Well, I really think I need to make my clothes out of something besides inferior grades of mean jeans. Oh, you do. And why is that? Well, at least my underwear. I really think that that's why I've been getting all these yeast infections. Really? Really. You mean those infections where you have to drink all that all that cranberry juice and and and we can't have sex for a week-to-ten days? Uh-huh. Yup. Those would be the ones. Oh, well, I uh I uh never intended to be a a a complete ideaoyue about Tanchya. You didn't? Really? You're not just writing that? Noooo. Of course not. I've always said that there's a world of difference between life-enhancing, technological progress on the one hand and and reactionary running-dog, lickspittle toadying, before the false idol of bourgeois materialism on the other hand. I've never heard you say that. Well, maybe not in so many words. Really? You mean it? You're not just writing, then?

30th of Summermonth 79- Actually, I uhm I have a couple of big surprises for you. You do? What are they? Well, my uhm my first big surprise is that that I've been really really doing a lot of thinking and and I really realized that you were right. I was right? Oh. That that is a big surprise. What uh what do you think I uh I was right about? Tanchya Tanchya? Mm. Uh-huh. Yeah. Tanchya. See I realized you were right that that there's so much so much more. To you know, life. More. Mm. Uh-huh Yeah To to life. Yeah You got it. Uh-huh. You mean more than than my giving, in to you on anything, we have a disagreement about when you're when you're having your period? Oh Yeah Uh-huh Way, way more You mean more than than my giving, in to you on anything, we have a disagreement about for five days BEFORE you get your period? Oh. Are you kidding? Hunh. Way, way, way more important than that You you mean more important than than my giving, in to you on anything, we have a disagreement about for five days AFTER you've finished your period? Oh. Hunh. Gosh. Are you kidding? Post Menstrual Syndrome? This is way, way, way more important than Post Menstrual Syndrome. Hunh. Mm. Yeah. Definitely. You mean..? Well, you can't mean that it's more important than your having, having, to to have breakfast within five minutes of of getting out of bed because of of of your low blood sugar? Oh, C'mon. Important things like like the MYSteries of Life. The mysteries of...? The MYSteries of Life. The MYSteries of Life. Well, uh let's see. I guess the the biggest... MYStery of Life ..I know of is is how you can starve yourself for four days on on saltines and water Allan and and then insist that that it's absolutely necessary for you to to DEVOUR a a four pound box of of Allan chocolates in one sitting. Allan. I mean it's it's not something that that keeps me awake nights like like wondering, if there is a God and and if there is Allan what uh what sort of off ice furniture he has Allan. But, but, just seeing the the number of chocolates you can get into your mouth at at at one time. Allan. Read what I am writing. Okay? Okay Sure I'm I'm I'm reading. Please By all means. Write something. What This isn't about before, during, or after my period. This isn't about my low blood sugar This isn't about saltines and water And this isn't about chocolates It isn't? No. It is Not. It is. Definitely. Definitely. Not Well, well. Okay those are those are all my best guesses. So um so maybe uh maybe you should should just write it down It's about about the the poor and and and the downtrodden and and and it's about the the the workers and and and the prophylactic The prophylactic? YES! You uh you don't mean the proletariat, do you? Oh. Right. Yes. Sorry. I always get those two confused. Yeah, see That's that's why I never send you to the drug store. So so so you mean that that that you've you've developed a a a social conscience? Yeah. Mm. Uh-huh That's what I mean. Well. That's That's that's wonderful. You're really, really taking an an an active interest Uh-huh. Yup. In in the plight of of of the the factorum and and the factorumess It's like I like I like I've really really, you know found myself and and and the quest for for the dignity of of excessive pay for for like I had been had been searching, you know? for work of outhouse value. Searching, and and searching, for for real meaning... you know? And and participating in the fruits of their labours And not even even knowing that that I was searching, you know? And and now you have found found real meaning... Oh. Uh-huh. Yup Real. Real. Real. Meaning. Hunh. Hmm. Yeah. Well, uh well how about that? Heh. Hm. Yeah. How about that? Well I'm uh I'm very, very proud of you, you know. You are? You really, really are? Well, sure Of course I am. Hunh. Hm. Wow. That's. That's really, really sweet. It really is. Definitely. I really feel that it, that it opens up this this this whole new dimension to our our our relationship. I have to say that I I find your new political activism terrifically, terrifically, terrifically you know, exciting! Yeah? You do? Hm. Ha Well. Well let's you know Well, for uh for one thing, I know that it it makes me want to want to want to, you know Want to...? You know to to to really really express how how exciting. I I find your activism and and and to find a way to to express my my solidarity, my my extremely extremely solid solidarity in a really really meaningful and and and physical Physical? Oh I. Hmm I. Gee. I see what you're writing, and uh Hm. No. See. Actually. Actually. Um. That's uh my my other uh big surprise What is?



She gave him her heart...
and he banged her like a screen door in a hurricane
John Fitzgerald
BEATTY
Annie
HALL
STUDS
PUH! PUH!

essay

Why Canada Slept

In Flanders Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders Fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you, from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields.

"In Flanders Fields" remains one of the most memorable war poems ever written, and probably the most famous poem from the First World War. It was written in the spring of 1915 by Major John McCrae (a Canadian military surgeon attached to the 1st Field Artillery Brigade) after he had spent seventeen days treating injured men—Canadians, British, Indians, French and Germans—in the Ypres salient. As he later wrote, "I wish I could embody on paper some of the varied sensations of that seventeen days…Seventeen days of Hades! At the end of the first day if anyone had told us we had to spend seventeen days there, we would have folded our hands and said it could not have been done." One death particularly affected McCrae. A young friend and former student, Lieut. Alexis Helmer of Ottawa, had been killed by a shell burst on 2 May 1915. Lieutenant Helmer was buried later that day in the little cemetery outside McCrae's dressing station, and McCrae had performed the funeral ceremony in the absence of the chaplain. The next day, sitting on the back of an ambulance parked near the dressing station, he spent twenty minutes of precious rest time scribbling fifteen lines of verse in a notebook. Cyril Allinson, a twenty-two year old sergeant-major was delivering mail that day when he spotted McCrae. "His face was very tired but calm as he wrote," Allinson recalled. "He looked around from time to time, his eyes straying to Helmer's grave." When McCrae finished, he took his mail from Allinson and, without saying a word, handed his pad to the young NCO. "The poem was an exact description of the scene in front of us both. He used the word blow in that line because the poppies actually were being blown that morning by a gentle east wind. It never occurred to me at that time that it would ever be published. It seemed to me just an exact description of the scene." "In Flanders Fields" was first published in *Punch* on 8 December 1915.

I remember reciting "In Flanders Fields" in the gymnasium at Forest Hill Public School at the age of eight or nine as part of the Remembrance Day assembly which took place every year on the 11th of November, commemorating the cessation of hostilities at 11 a.m. on 11 November 1918. With the magnification of retrospect to which small children are susceptible, I remembered the memorization of it as an arduous task, involving stanza upon stanza of majestic poetry. Almost a year ago now, after 11 September, when I had gone to the library to look it up—and where the librarian had helpfully printed it out for me from the Internet, I was both amazed—and amused—to find that the stanzas I remembered most vividly constituted the entirety of the poem.

The website carries a copyright of 1995 (Rob Ruggenberg) and indicates that it was last modified 11 November 1996. Very much of a piece with Canada's left liberal quasi-socialist inclinations, the listing includes the observation "…often only the *first two verses* are cited or printed. This is not just because of the lack of quality in the third verse, but also because this last verse speaks of an unending

quarrel with the foe. And if one thing became clear during the Great War it was this: there was *no* quarrel between the soldiers (except maybe in the heat of a fight). The quarrel existed only in the minds of some politicians and high-ranking officers (who mostly never experienced the horror of the battlefield)."

This is, of course, (like most left liberal quasi-socialist revisionist cant) patently untrue. In the first decades of the twentieth century it would have been most unusual for any politician or any military officer to rise in rank, prominence or both without having served his country (or, in Canada's case, the Crown) on the battlefield. Military service—prior to John Lennon -was universally accepted as a masculine responsibility to the common good: in peacetime, an omnipresent masculine likelihood and, in wartime, an inescapable masculine given. Young men were soldiers and older men were officers and still older men were leaders. In the masculine scheme of things, it was nonsensical for a soldier to second-guess an officer, or for an officer to second-guess his leader. Anyone doubting the wisdom of that infrastructure had only to look at the French military, grounded in the sensibility of their Revolution where, until very, very recently, everyone second-guessed everyone else at every level of the military hierarchy with the result that everyone went off half-cocked in every direction and the primary French military strategy until very, very recently consisted of milling about aimlessly until it was time for a wholesale retreat and surrender. .One of the central theses of "Why Canada Slept" is that there *is* a foe or, rather, a Foe, and that this is what men of honour have, as a primary masculine responsibility, to recognize and to commit themselves to opposing—by all appropriate means—where and when that Foe emerges. And "emerge" he does. As an example: Wilhelm Richard Wagner was not the Foe. Nor was Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche. Nor, arguably, was Kaiser Wilhelm I. Kaiser Wilhelm *II,* however, was. Adolf Hitler was. The great failure of the Western Democracies, 1933-1939, in my view, was threefold: it constituted a failure to recognize the emergence of a Foe, a failure to reach a consensus that a Foe had emerged and a failure to take timely and concerted action against that Foe. As another example: Karl Heinrich Marx was not the Foe. Nor was Leon Trotsky. Joseph Stalin, however, was. Joseph Stalin was the Foe and all of Stalin's successors up to—but not including—Mikhail Gorbachev, were the Foe. In the example which confronts the Western Democracies at this moment in history, Muhammad is not the foe, Islam is not the foe, but Osama bin Laden is the Foe, Yasser Arafat is the Foe. And even that isn't entirely accurate. More accurate to say Osama bin Laden is *part* of the Foe. Yasser Arafat is *part* of the Foe. For the first time in history, the Foe is not at the apex of a hierarchical national "pyramid". All that has changed is that the quintessential "old dog" of human history, the Foe, has learned a "new trick": diversification into the lower ranks.

* * * * * *

It is worth remembering that, in his day, Hitler fit the same category in that Hitler was a "new trick," from the "old dog" of human history, the Foe. Or, more accurately, Hitler was "a trick which had only been used by the Foe once before, but with great success" -the little corporal who leapfrogs the masculine pecking order (soldier to junior officer to Commissioned Officer to Senior Officer to Division Commander to Senior Command to Political Representative, to Senior Political Representative to Deputy Cabinet Secretary to Cabinet Secretary to Deputy Leader to Leader) and basically went straight from "Radar O'Reilly" to Emperor. In a conventional masculine world it is very hard to take such an individual—a corporal who decides he is going to be the Emperor—seriously. I'm sure there isn't a military officer *above* the rank of corporal who hasn't had any number of Napoleons or Hitlers serving under him at any given time: an "odd duck" who can be trusted to do the paperwork and the filing and who manages, without distinction, to discharge a limited number of obligations but who gets a little "glittery" in the eyes at the first whiff of anything approximating power or decision-making. It's like a lottery. Millions of them come and go over the centuries, advance a rank or two, retire on a small pension and are never heard from again. But, just as with a lottery, you do have that lucky "one"—or, in the case of the early-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries—"two". Lucky for them, unlucky for civilization. That was the "old dog's" "new trick"—counting on the fact that the sheer ridiculousness of a nondescript little corporal deciding to become Emperor would buy the little corporal sufficient time to accomplish his task.

* * * * * *

Gerhard, as I have mentioned elsewhere, works at home now, but he does come in on Tuesdays to do his part of the office work. They had been tearing up the street in front of the studio for the better part of the summer. While I was working on some mindless task of some kind—"blacking in" or something—I could swear that I heard the workers outside saying something about "the Pentagon." I chalked it up to mishearing on my part. Just before Ger came in, I swore I heard it again. "The Pentagon." When Ger arrived, he told me that planes had hit the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. "What nationality?" "American. Hijacked passenger planes. One of the Towers has already collapsed." At the time, I had a portable television and VCR next to the drawing board (specifically acquired for watching the Three Stooges frame-by-frame so that I could draw them accurately from various angles). The television only got one channel, CKCO, the Kitchener CTV affiliate a few blocks away. I turned it on and there was the remaining tower billowing smoke. I had just enough time to glance down at the corner of the screen and register the word "LIVE" when the Tower collapsed into itself.

It took me three tries to get it out, but the first thing I said was, "The United States is the most heavily-armed country on the planet. The question is, now, 'Will they turn the world into one big police state?'" I spent the rest of the day turning the television on long enough to find out if anything else had happened, leaving it on if there was something worth listening to—the entirety of Rudy Giuliani's press conference, as an example—and then turning it off when the network "bingo callers" (*Frank* magazine's designation for television news anchors) started firing up the Big Feminist Emotion Yadda Yadda Yadda Steamroller.

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I'm still surprised that it wasn't until the next day that I realized that there was going to be a war. Surprised, because I'm usually pretty astute—at least about the broad strokes—and (as broad strokes go) this one was about as broad as they come. Once it became clear that there *was* going to be a war, I immediately began to consider my own obligations as an adult male citizen of a NATO country. On the one hand, I definitely wanted to finish *Cerebus*. On the other hand, I'm very big on being able to look myself in the eye in the mirror when I'm shaving. The Canadian military was in a thoroughly disreputable state and had been for years. Not the military personnel themselves who are considered—pretty universally—to be "top-of-the-line," but in terms of matériel, Canada's military equipment—purely through age and attrition—had eroded to a near Third World level. This was nothing new for Canada's military which has usually been "tiny, ill-equipped and under-funded"—as it had been, as an example, in August of 1950 when we volunteered a brigade to defend South Korea. The brigade had to be raised from scratch and didn't fully arrive in Korea until 10 months later. War is declared and Canada throws itself into a furious spurt of activity and expenditure, managing to get "up-to-speed" just in time to make a significant contribution in a major battle or two (I'll be dealing more specifically with Canada's military history in the next instalment). In the immediate aftermath of 11 September, it seemed to me that the only honourable course of action for a country like Canada to take—having allowed our NATO obligations to lapse to such an unconscionable degree—was to volunteer on an interim basis, basically, as cannon fodder. I had assumed that cannon fodder would be much in demand in Afghanistan if most of the campaign was going to involve extracting al-Qaeda fighters from mountain caves. I'm not exactly a *Soldier of Fortune* subscriber, but I was aware that the estimated casualty figures involved in "cave extraction warfare" run in the 8:1, 9:1 range. That is, you're going to lose eight or nine men for every one you kill (most of them as a result of "friendly fire"). Well, you know, fair enough. I had *assumed* (such was the level of my disengagement from feminist societal reality) that *overnight*, the military in the NATO countries were going to be up to their eyeballs in volunteers (comparable to what happened in 1914 and 1939)—countries like Canada would volunteer for the "dirty jobs" of sending wave upon wave of ill-equipped soldiers into the caves of Tora Bora and, over the course of a year or two, the military authorities would find out what to do with the *real* soldiers based on what had happened to the cannon fodder. I prepared myself to volunteer for "cannon fodder duty".

This next part of the story had Chester Brown laughing pretty good recently when I told him and—a year later—I am able to see the humour in it, but it sure wasn't funny at the time.

I got into the habit of watching the news on my one television channel—mostly to find out if the Americans had captured Osama bin Laden yet and what the state of the war was in general—and happened to catch an interview with a Canadian Forces recruitment officer (this would've been late in

September) and the "bingo caller" was asking him, you know, what sort of response there had been, volunteer-wise so far. Well, uh, not a whole lot. No? No. So far, it's mostly guys in their thirties and forties.

The recruitment officer laughed. The "bingo caller" laughed. Yeah, mostly guys who used to be in the military and (the recruitment officer laughed again), you know, they just want to help. The "bingo caller" laughed. And they moved on to other subjects.

I went through a few mental contortions of how I might forge a new date on my passport and then began the arduous process of learning to accept that from now on, while shaving, I would be staring directly into the eyes of an entirely useless old man. It was—in my newfound role as an entirely useless old man—that I came to accept that the only self-admittedly meager contribution I could make in the early hours of the first defining moment of the 21st century would be an attempt to try to explain to my readers and (chalk it up to a useless old man's vanity) possibly to posterity my strongly held views on the positive attributes of the Muslim faith, past and present, in a series of essays which became, ultimately, "Islam, My Islam".

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It was a few days later that I suddenly remembered "In Flanders Fields," suddenly remembered "Take up our quarrel with the foe, to you from failing hands we throw the torch; be yours to hold it high, if ye break faith with us who die…" and realized that that was exactly what had taken place virtually everywhere in the great democracies over the last number of decades, that was exactly what was taking place in the fall of 2001and that was (I was pretty sure) exactly what was, ultimately, going to leave the United States, Israel and Tony Blair and one-third of his Cabinet isolated from the world community as the War on Terrorism began in earnest. What I realized was that—collectively—the men of my generation had "broken faith" with the war dead, with those young men of the last century (and of previous centuries) who had willingly committed the ultimate sacrifice on the clear, implicit, *masculine* understanding that when it came time for a *subsequent* generation of men to do the same—when next a Foe emerged—that they would do so. Not *happily*, not *joyfully*—only the Foe finds happiness and joy and glory in war—but with firm resolve that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance. Vigilance not just as a term, not just as a prerequisite of freedom but vigilance which has as its aim apprehending *realistically* the emergence of the Foe in his new guise, apprehending *realistically* when it is necessary to take up arms against that newly emergent Foe. To recognize, in other words—by means of reason and common sense—a newly-emergent latter-day Hitler and to take concerted action against him in the latter-day equivalent of 1933 and not to delay taking action against him until the latter-day equivalent of 1939. The only alternative, inescapably, is to render meaningless the masculine sacrifice in Flanders Fields, in Ypres, the Somme, Bataan, Corregidor, Normandy, to render meaningless the deaths of previous generations of (degrading my argument to current levels of perception) young *boyfriends*, young *fiancées*, young *husbands* and young *fathers*, most in their teens and early twenties, all of whom, as Major John McRae so astutely put it, "lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow, Loved and were loved" to, in a very real, very masculine sense, bring shame upon one's own self and one's own generation by, in effect, saying to the war dead, "I'm glad that *you* sacrificed *your* life in its prime, sacrificed the years *you* would have had with *your* girlfriend, with *your* fiancée, with *your* wife, sacrificed being able to watch *your* children grow up, but *my* girlfriend, *my* fiancée, *my* wife, *my* children are far, far, *far* more important than *yours*." The lesson of 1933-1939 *should have been,* in my view (and, I suspect, *was*—for a decade or so) that the necessary and inevitable sacrifice of men's lives can be *minimized*—that is, fewer boyfriends, fewer fiancées, fewer husbands and fewer fathers will die—if the Foe is recognized and if concerted action is taken to eliminate the Foe early enough after his emergence: before he is able to arm himself sufficiently to commit acts of war on a monumental scale which will result in astronomical numbers of casualties both among his own forces and among those forces mounted to oppose him.

My own view is that Wahabite Islam is just such a Foe. My own view is that, at the moment, only the United States, Israel, Tony Blair and one-third of his Cabinet recognize that inescapable fact.

That only the United States and Israel, among nations, recognized that fact in the fall of 2001 and that only the United States and Israel are, in my view, "keeping faith" with the war dead today with their War on Terrorism, implied to me that, in addition to "Islam, my Islam" there needed to be a companion piece, a *mea culpa* for my generation of men, for the generation of men which immediately pre-

ceded my own and for the subsequent generations of men in my audience. A communication, if you will, from a thoroughly useless old man that I hope in some small way, speaks to the failure—the continuing failure—of all nations apart from the United States and Israel to recognize that Wahabite Islam is the emergent Foe of the 21st century which must be confronted and which *will* be confronted—exacting either a smaller toll in men's lives today or a much larger toll in men's lives a handful of years from now with, I am convinced, no other option possible.

"Why Canada Slept" is my attempt at that communication.

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"Why Canada Slept" is a conscious play on the title of John F. Kennedy's graduate thesis at Harvard, *Why England Slept,* which represented his examination of the complacency exhibited by England between the two World Wars and his examination of the difficulties faced by the great democracies both in achieving consensus in peacetime and in mobilizing men and machinery in the face of a mounting threat ("We cannot tell anyone to keep out of our hemisphere unless our armaments and the people behind these armaments are prepared to back up the command, even to the ultimate point of going to war"). It was a provocative—and timely —analysis which won him a cum laude citation and, with the assistance of Arthur Krock, Blair Clark and others, was published as a book in 1942. There is a certain amount of mythology attached to the book's success, centering on the question of how many copies were purchased by Kennedy patriarch, Joseph P. Kennedy. It would surprise no one to find out that the attics of the houses which make up the Kennedy "compound" at Hyannis Port were thickly insulated with copies of *Why England Slept* and, later, with first printings of *Profiles in Courage.*

In a very real sense, however, the book marked out the twenty-three-year-old for greatness at an early age. I suspect that whatever limited success it enjoyed at the time could be attributed to the very theme of the book being so diametrically opposed to the well-known views of Joseph P. Kennedy who, as the American ambassador to the Court of St. James, probably ranks second only to Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain as the most notorious of the "appeasers" of Adolf Hitler (to such an extent that he was ultimately recalled from his post by President Franklin Roosevelt). In this, the book exhibited one of the least becoming Kennedy family traits: opportunism. I suspect (and I'm not alone in this) that Joseph Kennedy—having recognized that he had "bet the farm" of his own political ambitions on the "wrong horse," appeasement—wanted to guarantee that his son got onto the right side of the historical ledger as quickly as possible. I suspect that, as a result, in wartime Washington, *Why England Slept* was viewed as something of a "man bites dog" novelty act—a critique by Kennedy's son of those very individuals and institutions which his father had endorsed and encouraged through his own appeasement. The title itself was, in its own time, a conscious play on *While England Slept,* the title used for an American edition of a collection of Winston Churchill's speeches which had been published in England in 1937 as *Arms and the Covenant.* Years later the White House revealed that a copy of *While England Slept* had lain on President Roosevelt's bedside table, with key passages, including an analysis of the president's peace initiative, underscored —an altogether exceptional circumstance given that Roosevelt seldom read anything besides newspapers. In a letter from Churchill to his wife (8 July 1938) he wrote, "*Arms and the Covenant* has not gone as well as we expected. They have sold 4,000, but the price is high, and it is by no means certain that a second edition will be required. The reviews have been very good and I am glad we collected and published the speeches." Kennedy's *Why England Slept* (despite his father's hyperbolic boast to Churchill in a letter that "it is already a best-seller in the nonfiction group") did only marginally better at twelve thousand copies.

But—leaving aside what may or may not have been John (and Joseph) Kennedy's motivations behind the composition and publication of *Why England Slept*—the larger meaning, to me, attaches itself to the *bourdon* cautionary note struck. That is, whatever prescience and precision had been either lacking or abundant within both *While England Slept* (Churchill's attempt to rouse his countrymen to take action against the gathering storm) and *Why England Slept* (Kennedy's retrospective examination of why those attempts by Churchill and others failed) the over-arching thought expressed by the titles *alone* was—and, in my view, *will always be*—worthy of serious and central consideration by the men of *any* generation in *any* of the world's great democracies: *Here and now,* is my country *vital* and *awake*? Or is my country *complacent* and *somnambulant*? I would argue that—in the face of England's pre-war and post-war fate—the collective and individual shock experienced by the young American

men of John Kennedy's generation (at those universities which constitute the "farm system" of America's leadership) was an enduring one. That is, there was the *initial* shock which resulted from the realization that it was, indeed, possible for the pre-eminent democracy of its day, its leadership, its citizenry and its institutions, to lapse into a national "fugue" state indistinguishable from complete unconsciousness. Then there was the *further* shock at the realization that, once entered into, England's national "fugue" state had become virtually universal, virtually unassailable (to the extent that a first printing of four thousand copies of *While England Slept,* warning of the storm clouds of war gathering across the English Channel, was deemed sufficient to meet public demand in a country of tens of millions). Then, I believe there was the *still further* shock that the "fugue" state remained virtually universal and virtually unassailable right up to the moment when fascist jackboots were, for all intents and purposes, audibly coming up the front steps. This shock to the system of the American body politic, I believe, was reinforced by the subsequent loss of Empire, the erosion of the British Empire into the residue of the British Commonwealth and the—consequent—inexorable shift of global preeminence from the resident of 10 Downing Street to the resident of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

It was as a direct result of this shock, I believe, that—beginning with John Kennedy's generation—a bi-partisan consensus emerged among American men as the soon-to-be heirs of British preeminence, hegemony, influence (whatever you want to call it) and I believe that that consensus quickly distilled itself into: Let's *Not* Have That Happen To *Us*.

As a direct result, America maintained its vigilance and its military preparedness, maintaining the democratic ideal of civilian control of the military while successfully sequestering the Pentagon and its budget—both in wartime *and,* more amazingly, in *peacetime*—from the natural inclination of civilian authorities to slash peacetime military budgets with a meat cleaver. Given the inevitability of conflict which has always and which will always exist between civilian and military authorities and given the economies of scale—or, rather, Scale—which were involved, this was no mean feat. Doubly so as John Lennon "strutted and fretted his hour upon the stage" and "Hell no, we won't go" became the watchword for a generation of men whose resolve to practice vigilance, to perceive accurately and to meet the threat of an emergent Foe while his elimination still represented a "police action" rather than a worldwide conflagration rebelled (I think justifiably) at the casting of the North Vietnamese and Ho Chi Minh in the role of Foe instead of foe (as foolish a perception, in retrospect, as casting South Viet Nam, Ngo Dinh Diem and his successors as Allies instead of allies). However, as is always the danger in these cases "Hell no, we won't go" which began life as a concise reaction to an unjust and objectiveless war swiftly eroded into a universal statement of left liberal quasi-socialist—which is to say *feminized*—policy: Hell no, we won't go…*anywhere, anytime, under any conditions, no matter what is at stake*.

(There was nothing especially new in this, either. In 1933, nine days after Hitler had become the German chancellor, the Oxford Union held a debate on the question "Resolved: That this House refuses in any circumstances to fight for King and Country." The union voted for the affirmative, 275 to 153. Winston Churchill, at the time, denounced the vote as "abject, squalid, shameless".)

What was interesting (and which didn't fully come to light until President Clinton bombed Kosovo to get Monica Lewinsky off the front page—of just such strange bedfellows are the watershed moments of a great democracy composed) was that the Pentagon, in the aftermath of the United States' great failure in Viet Nam (failure of perception, failure of policy, failure of will, military failure, diplomatic failure, political failure and, thus, democratic failure) had, evidence now indicated, moved in response to the implicit will of "We, the People" in truly democratic fashion, institutionally asking itself the question: Why? That is, Why is a substantial portion of the American body politic unwilling to go anywhere, anytime, under any conditions, no matter what was at stake? And the answer was: casualties. The consensus view of a significant number of American citizens had demonstrated either a complete intolerance for or profound aversion to battlefield casualties ("significant" from the Pentagon's standpoint in that it might or might not represent a *majority* viewpoint and, thus—given that, in a democracy, policy is shaped by the viewpoint of the majority—might, at any given political "moment," pose a threat to the Pentagon's continued existence). Like any democratic institution, governed by the need to respond to the will of "We, the People," the Pentagon basically set about solving the problem, developing military technologies which would minimize battlefield casualties to such an extent as to virtually eliminate them. Eliminate casualties and you eliminate the largest objection in a democracy to military action. The extent to which this was made possible by the development of high altitude bombers, supersonic fighter aircraft and laser-guided missile technology was first demonstrated in the Gulf War

by (not surprisingly) a President whose own military background was in the Air Force, George Bush, Sr. (Political leaders with military backgrounds invariably favour—when it comes to military decision-making—the branch of the armed services of which they themselves are veterans: Roosevelt and Churchill were both Navy men, thus the Normandy invasion with the preeminent role of battleships, aircraft carriers and landing craft, likewise John F. Kennedy's *naval* blockade of Cuba during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962). The larger lesson of the extent to which the nature of warfare had been permanently transformed by these quantum leaps forward in the technology of the "air war" was rather lost on most people in 1991. Of far greater moment in the popular imagination was the *duration* of the conflict—Yoko Ono and Sean Lennon having barely had time to cobble together a "We are the World" cast of left liberal, quasi-socialist singers (for some reason Chevy Chase and someone in a giant Bugs Bunny costume stick out in my mind) and shoot a video for a re-release of "Give Peace a Chance" before the whole war was *over*. The irrefutable argument that this presented was: why jeopardize popular support for military action with ground troops, since ground troops are far more susceptible to casualties than are pilots, given that popular support erodes in direct proportion to the number of casualties sustained? That is, the length of time that popular support for a military action can be maintained is proportional to the length of time that casualty figures can be kept to single digits. The *exact* proportion is, as yet, unknown but, extrapolating from the Desert Storm experience and the War in Afghanistan it can be measured in weeks, but probably not months. I would qualify this by saying that I think this dynamic governs only the period of time between the commencement of formal hostilities and their formal end. Military occupation, mopping-up operations, rebuilding of infrastructure and nation-building are (for reasons inexplicable to me) very much "off the radar screen" of Yoko Ono, Sean Lennon, Chevy Chase, whomever-that-was-in-the-giant-Bugs-Bunny-suit, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, et al.

But, as I say, the effectiveness of the "pure air war"—a war fought exclusively with high-altitude aircraft and laser-guided missiles—didn't fully come to light until President Clinton used it in Kosovo where it largely solved what had (to that point) been seen as the very intricate problem, the diplomatic Gordian Knot writ large, the powder-keg and the potential Viet Nam-style quagmire posed by Slobodan Milosevic. Which, in my view, proved actually to be nothing more than an emergent Foe whose forces were crushed in a timely fashion, metaphorically in "1933" rather than "1939". That is, Milosevic was stopped the way Hitler should have been stopped. None of the dire consequences foretold by the would-be Cassandras of the UN, the EU or the global hand-wringing chorus of the left liberal quasi-socialists came to pass as a result of the United States taking decisive action in Kosovo. What is interesting, however, is how this constituency still manages to hold to these central beliefs no matter how often they are thoroughly repudiated. The UN, the EU and the United States are not mired down in Kosovo. The UN, the EU and the United States are not mired down in Afghanistan and I don't believe, personally, that the United States will get mired down in Iraq if it chooses to act militarily against Saddam Hussein. I believe that the United States, by virtue of its belief in its own responsibilities as a great democracy to remain vigilant and to act in a timely fashion against Foes (taking Adolf Hitler, rather than Ho Chi Minh, as the template for the nature of the Foe), by virtue of having developed technologies not only sufficient to the task, but technologies which are, therefore, fully responsive to the implicit popular first priorities of its own citizenry whose will is expressed through its democratically elected leadership ("we don't want any of our people being hurt and we want a minimum of civilian casualties on the other side") is now in the best position to determine where and when that technology is to be used. Had any *other* democracy, or, indeed, any other *nation* endeavoured to keep pace with the United States in the aftermath of the Second World War, devoting a *comparable* percentage of its GDP to national defense and to shared defense under the UN charter and under the charter of such organizations as NATO, then I could see some semblance of an obligation on the part of the United States to consult with its allies when it comes to where and when those technologies are going to be used and to put together *scrupulously broad-based* coalitions before even beginning to consider whether or not to take military action. However, given the state of the western democracies half a century or so after the end of the Second World War (I'll fall back on the illustration I used in "Islam, my Islam"—the United States has a .357 magnum and the rest of us are using sharpened sticks), I think it ridiculous for the country with the .357 to make any effort whatsoever to accommodate or even consider the views of any country which is defending its borders with sharpened sticks and which seeks to create the illusion that it is capable of discharging its military obligations *in* the world and *to* the world with sharpened sticks.

In the years that I have been alive and aware of geopolitical world realities, it seemed to me that the

reason that the great democracies—apart from the United States—contented themselves with a military so "bare-boned" in its nature that the analogy of "sharpened sticks" holds up nicely was that the consensus view had emerged apart from in the United States—that "War is Over (If You Want It)" (to quote Yoko Ono's late husband). I could never quite bring myself to believe that. The view always seemed redolent to me of wishful thinking and whistling past the graveyard. The fact that World War I was popularly described—up until 1939—as the "war to end all wars" indicated to me that the track record in the great democracies for accurate prognostication of "the end for all time" of armed conflict as an element of human history was not (to say the least) unblemished. I *do* believe that war *will* end one day, just as is promised in the Scriptures. One day, men will beat their swords into plowshares and will "learn war no more," but, unlike the Kumbaya brigade, I've never thought that the way to bring that about is to close your eyes, clasp hands and *sing* it into existence. I didn't anticipate that the next Foe would be Wahabite Islam, but then, we never have, as a civilization, guessed who the next Foe was going to be. Nor would I hazard a guess as to who will be the next Foe once the great democracies have successfully dealt with Wahabite Islam. The best evidence of history, to me, indicates that the only appropriate course of action has always been and is always going to be vigilance and accurate perception and the avoidance of wishful thinking (I remember Ronald Reagan at a press conference with Mikhail Gorbachev quoting a Russian proverb: "Trust, but verify!" Gorbachev stepped forward and, through his translator, said, "You keep quoting that same proverb," which got a good laugh from the international press corps. To which Reagan replied, "Because I *like* it, Mr. Chairman" which got a bigger laugh).

Up until 11 September, I would have counted myself in the ranks of supporters of the UN and those who gave the *benefit of the doubt* to the *idea* of war being "over". Prior to 11 September, it seemed to me that war was either "over" temporarily (but was unlikely to recur until late in my lifetime) or it was "over" temporarily (and was unlikely to recur until I had been long gone). The regional conflicts in the world, to me, constituted house parties that had gotten a little out of hand when compared to the First and Second World Wars and I thought the UN and the "good will" of men more than sufficient to keep them below a tolerable threshold. As the "post-war era" stretched past the half-century mark (as compared with the 21 years between the First and Second World Wars) like most people, I saw the United States as being in a permanent state of military *over*-preparedness which I saw, in turn, as a product of the military-industrial complex of which Eisenhower had warned near the end of his second term of office. This *over*-preparedness looked as excessive to me as did Canada's complete *lack* of military preparedness. 11 September changed that perception for me in much the same way that betting my entire savings on a horse that came in dead last in a race would have changed my perception of that horse. I live in a country which has "bet the farm" on war being "over" in the same way that Joseph Kennedy "bet the farm" on appeasement of Hitler being the correct course of action. Clearly, war is not "over" and is nowhere near to being "over". To me, the United States now becomes the central consideration by virtue of being the only one of the great democracies to have bet on any *other* horse besides "War is Over". In a world where owning a .357 magnum suddenly seems to be a "not bad" idea (to say the least), having contented yourself, as a country, with a sharpened stick it seems only sensible to me that you would offer what meager support you *can* offer *to* the country with the .357 magnum (offering a cobbled-together mass of the aforementioned "cannon fodder" being, in my view, a sensible place to start) and begin, as quickly as possible, to upgrade from a sharpened stick to…well, just about anything, since just about anything is going to be of more use than a sharpened stick. Most particularly, to determine in the short, medium and long term, what the perceived requirements of the country with the .357 magnum are—to frankly and openly admit, "We bet on the wrong horse. We thought 'war was over'. War is not over. What can we do to supplement your military capability?" I also think that it would be an honourable course of action to admit that the United States—by virtue of "keeping faith" with the war dead of the great democracies (to the extent of developing technologies which permit the United States to conduct both virtually casualty-free warfare and to dramatically limit the length of any conflict) has thereby earned the right to stay out of the "dirty" end of warfare. To use the most obvious recent example, I think it was a deplorable shame that the United States thought it necessary to rely on Afghan "allies" like the Northern Alliance to pursue the al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters on the ground as they fled from Afghanistan into Pakistan. In a circumstance like Afghanistan (and, I suspect, Iraq) "almost all air" warfare *is* possible, but at some point ground troops are going to be required to achieve the central objective: the capture or confirmed execution of Osama bin Laden (or Saddam Hussein). That is, capturing bin Laden was an American priority and, to me, should have been a NATO and UN

priority but was, self-evidently, not a Northern Alliance priority. Having the al-Qaeda and Taliban forces "herded" out of Tora Bora and into Pakistan by air strikes solved every pressing concern which had faced the Northern Alliance—it's hard to imagine any strategic Northern Alliance purpose that would have been served in actually engaging the widely superior forces of al-Qaeda and the Taliban (against whom the Northern Alliance had previously had exactly "zero" success) in hand-to-hand combat—apart from trying to "please" the United States. With the luxury of 20-20 hindsight, I think this high-risk "pursuit" by ground forces could have more effectively—and honourably been accomplished with sheer masses of "cannon fodder" from all NATO countries—under the United States' command—in conformity with Colin Powell's strategic view which prevails at the highest levels of the Pentagon: that the United States should only commit to conflict where they have overwhelming superiority. Overwhelming superiority is a given in the "air war" if the United States is participating. As the only country which possesses weaponry sufficiently advanced technologically to make inevitable a) largely casualty-free conflicts and b) dramatically shortened conflicts, speaking personally, I would think it only fair that the United States assume the "low risk" ground troop positions in any conflict in which it participates and to expect its allies to assume the "high risk" ground troop positions in those same conflicts (by virtue of those allies bringing a demonstrably less militarily-valuable contribution to the NATO or UN "table"). Post-Afghanistan there remains only a certain amount of fine-tuning to be accomplished in the successful execution of "almost all air" warfare: particularly *how* and *at which point* you "switch" from the air war to a ground war. A handful of United States Special Forces on the ground can, quite successfully—using the most advanced laser and communications technology call in pin-point air-strikes by high altitude bombers using laser-guided missile technology to destroy the vast majority of the enemy's opposing forces and entrenched positions and, essentially, "herd" the survivors in a chosen direction, as was proven in Afghanistan. The only sensible course of action, to me, is to halt the air war once the "herding" process is underway and to either "herd" the survivors into a corner (if that's possible), or toward a numerically overwhelming superior ground force (if that's possible) or to pursue the survivors with a numerically overwhelming superior force. It seems only reasonable and honourable that these ground forces should be drawn from the ranks of the military of all NATO countries *besides* the United States and to place those ground forces and their national commanders under the sole and exclusive jurisdiction of U.S. military leaders (until such time as those countries begin to shoulder their fair share of the "heavy lifting" in upgrading their military capabilities to levels proportionately commensurate with those of the United States).

That is, to me, in an ideal, masculine, militarily hierarchical world, I think that those countries which have shirked their masculine responsibilities for decades—like Canada—agreeing to provide a disproportionately larger number of high-risk "pursuit" ground troops until such time as they have modernized their forces to an acceptable level would represent a sensible, honourable and ideal basis upon which to conduct the War on Terrorism.

Sadly, but not unexpectedly, that has proven to be so far from the case (with a few isolated exceptions which I'll be addressing later on in this series) as to render any discussion of what is "sensible" or "honourable" or "ideal" completely and entirely moot. Of course, where any subject—as this subject most assuredly does—touches upon the feminization of the western democracies this is not, to say the least, unexpected given that all three of those adjectives are so remote from the feminine experience as to represent a foreign language to them. So, let us leave "sensible," "honourable" and "ideal" entirely to one side and begin, instead, a discussion of Her Majesty's Once and Future Dominion and/or Quasi-Nation-State of Canada, the deplorable and feminized state in which it found itself on 11 September 2001 and why that state has not, in my view, changed one iota since.

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As I have already indicated, having expected that the reaction to the events of 11 September among the western democracies would be a virtually instantaneous "rising up" of those democracies in support of the first and greatest of the vanguard democracies, the United States of America, I was not surprised to find Canada to be "slow off the mark". On 11 September, when President Bush had closed American airspace and directed that all planes in the air were to be diverted, one of the places to which those aircraft were diverted was Gander, Newfoundland. Gander is about as far east as you can be in North America and still be in North America. It's a very small community (11,000 or so) but its airport is the first resort of air traffic coming into Canada or the United States in the event of an emergency. On

September 11—and for a number of days afterward—the people of Gander hosted a little less than *7,000* stranded travelers from dozens of diverted international flights—that is, approximately two-thirds again the size of its own population. Not only was every square inch of community space devoted to serving the needs of the stranded passengers, but virtually every resident of Gander opened their own homes for that same purpose—all without a suggestion of compensation, all without any participation by the federal government. Unquestionably, the people of Gander, Newfoundland provided Canada with its finest hour in the immediate aftermath of the events of 11 September. To what I regard as Canada's eternal and ineradicable shame, it would prove to be the *last* contribution *any* Canadian would make for some time.

"The subject who is truly loyal to the chief magistrate
will neither advise nor submit to arbitrary measures."
Junius

My own immediate decision was to pull the inside front cover and part two of "Is Dave Brady *Actually* Gay?" from *Cerebus* 271 which was already at the printer, leaving me little time to decide what to replace them with. Mindful of the fact that I was living in a country which was behaving in what I saw as a thoroughly deplorable fashion at the highest levels (exposing what I saw as an inconceivable degree of fundamental disloyalty to Canada's greatest ally that—literally, moment-by-moment—boggled my mind) only compounded the problem I was facing. For a period of several days Prime Minister Jean Chrétien seemed completely unable to comprehend the significance of what had happened. For those with long experience with the ways of Canadians and (most especially) Canadian Liberals, this was not entirely unexpected. Knee-jerk anti-Americanism is at least as Canadian as maple syrup and this is nowhere more in evidence than in the Liberal Party of Canada of which Mr. Chrétien is the leader. He is also of that generation that I think of as "first wave feminists," those who first "took" to the idea of men and women being interchangeable as a duck "takes" to water. In fact, in the first couple of days after 11 September most inquiries directed to the Prime Minister about 11 September were met with wholly irrelevant and inexplicable dissertations on how Canada is the envy of so many other nations and how leaders of other countries were always dumbfounded—awe-stricken, in fact, according to the Prime Minister—by the news that Mr. Chrétien's Cabinet consists half of *male* Ministers and half of *female* Ministers (this was demonstrably untrue as we shall see in a subsequent installment of this essay). That the "boy/girl/boy/girl" composition of his Cabinet was completely irrelevant to the destruction of the twin towers of the World Trade Center and the attack on the Pentagon seemed not to have occurred to the Prime Minister. Again, this was not entirely (at least on my part) unexpected since I have, for some time, considered the Prime Minister to be in that category of "hollowed-out ventriloquist puppet husband". That is, I have long suspected that, as a "first wave feminist" and a "hollowed-out ventriloquist puppet husband," the first thing he asks himself when posed any question is: "What would Aline say?" (Aline is Mrs. The Prime Minister's name). And, I think, given that women had no idea *what* to say about the events of 11 September—then *or* now—the Prime Minister was left to parrot a view which his wife held about a completely unrelated subject (which, I'm sure, they both believed was infinitely more important than the terrorist attacks on a NATO ally) while he waited for all the fuss about 11 September to, basically, go away.

So my first instinct was to write an apology to my American readers for what was going on north of the 49th parallel. And then I realized that that would be in particularly bad taste given that most of my American readers were (mercifully) spared any awareness of Canada's deplorable reaction by virtue of Canada existing at a place below most American's "radar" and that introducing the subject so soon after 11 September would constitute its own form of fatuous Canadian navel-gazing, albeit in a different direction. I decided instead to save my honest observations for "Why Canada Slept" (which, at the time, I believed would be coming out in three or four months). I finally decided to run "foreign policy" excerpts from John F. Kennedy's speech which had been prepared for the Dallas Trade Mart luncheon. Given that most of my audience (like the vast majority of the comic-book field itself) is in the "left liberal" camp (the group which—it was obvious to me, even then—had experienced the most dramatic and wrenching political dislocation as a result of the events of 11 September) I thought it would not be entirely unhelpful to remind them that someone who (in many ways inexplicably) has found himself in the Liberal Pantheon was, in his day, far from a "peacenik," far from "squishy" and very far from being a "wishful thinker"—although his portrayal by left liberals has, in recent years, tended to cast

him in each of those roles.

That still left the inside front cover, which—pretty much at the last minute—I decided to fill with an excerpt from *The National Post*'s coverage of the Memorial held on Parliament Hill on 14 September, hopeful that the coming months would validate the words of Prime Minister Chrétien: "Generation after generation, we have traveled many difficult miles together. Side by side, we have lived through many dark times, always firm in our shared resolve to vanquish any threat to freedom and justice. And together, with our allies, we will defy and defeat the threat that terrorism poses to all civilized nations."

Actually, "hopeful" is a little too strong a word. Even four days after the tragedies of 11 September which transcended all boundaries, national and otherwise, I was reasonably certain that in scrupulous, two-faced, feminist fashion, the Prime Minister had decided to make his intentions sound as good as possible while committing Canada to do as little as he could humanly get away with. Which, considering how little the United States had come to expect from Canada, turned out to be very little, indeed. Even at the time, I had thought that Paul Cellucci, the American ambassador to Canada could have shortened his already brief and, in my view, undeservedly gracious remarks at the ceremony to: "Thank you for your…" [lengthy pause] "…words" and it would still have been more than Canada deserved.

Not having a television at home and being unaware that the speech was scheduled, I missed President Bush's address to the Joint Session of Congress on 20 September. I did not, unfortunately, miss the appalling example of Canadian navel-gazing which swept this country on 21 September. President Bush, in thanking America's allies for their support in the aftermath of 11 September, had failed to mention Canada. How can I describe the wrenching level of embarrassment that I experienced that day on behalf of my country? Embarrassment? Hell. *Shame!* An excruciating, soul-deep level of humiliation I can't remember ever having experienced before and which I will count myself, indeed, fortunate if I never experience it again. Canada, dear feminized, self-absorbed, fatuous, feel-good, praise-hungry Canada was still…*still!*…by 20 September bathing contentedly in the warm afterglow—not of what *Canada* had done, but of what the citizens of *Gander, Newfoundland* had done. By osmosis, every arrogant left liberal quasi-socialist in Canada who wouldn't (under ordinary circumstances) even admit to having an indirect association with Newfoundland except in the most patronizing and distanced and arrogant way, had suddenly become a self-appointed honorary citizen of Gander, Newfoundland and had tuned in to President Bush's speech, in no small part, for the express and exclusive purpose of hearing themselves thanked, as self-appointed honorary citizens of Gander, Newfoundland, by the President of the United States on national television.

HE DIDN'T THANK LUXEMBOURG, EITHER! I wanted to scream across a nation-wide public address system. Like most Canadians, I know virtually nothing about Luxembourg—which my Funk & Wagnall informs me is "a constitutional grand duchy, between Belgium, France and Germany; 998 sq. mi." However, like most Canadians, I know the *name* because Luxembourg is the only member of NATO which makes a *smaller* contribution of its Gross Domestic Product to that organization than does the self-confessed "True North, Strong and Free." (Canada contributes 1.15% of GDP. The average…*average!*...NATO contribution is 2.13%). What had, apparently, completely escaped the notice of my fellow citizens was that by the time President Bush was addressing the Joint Session of Congress, the United States and the rest of the world had moved on to the infinitely more pressing issue—infinitely more pressing, that is, to everyone else in the world *besides* Canada—of what shape the military response to 11 September would take. "Gander, Newfoundland" was now carved in large letters in the "Legend of 11 September" only a) in the fervent, fame-hungry, collective Canadian imagination which is always desperate to seize a share of the spotlight on the world stage by any means possible (so long as it doesn't involve fulfilling our obligations to our allies or, you know, *hurting* anyone) and b) the minds and hearts of those stranded travelers who had experienced first-hand the inspirational open-handedness of the *actual citizens* of Gander, Newfoundland and who (it would please me no end) probably have no idea *to this day* that Newfoundland has anything to *do* with Canada. At the time of the President's speech, when asked about Canada's participation in the imminent war in Afghanistan, Prime Minister Chrétien, in good, conventional, feminized Canadian fashion kept repeating that we hadn't been *asked* to contribute any forces. And in likewise good, conventional, feminized Canadian fashion, not one reporter asked, "Well, aren't we going to *offer* our forces?" Not a bit of it. And then the entire country has the nerve, the unmitigated gall to take umbrage at having been left out of President Bush's *WARTIME* address to the Joint Session of Congress.

I was slow to begin tearing articles out of the paper. I kept hoping that Prime Minister Chrétien

would either be shamed into "coming around" on his own or that sufficient pressure would build to compel him to behave in a more honourable fashion. He has very, very good political instincts. The Canadian political graveyard is littered with individuals who have underestimated the Prime Minister and his ability to sense each subtle change in the political winds and to make sure that it is his sails which are being filled by them. I kept waiting for him to sense that 11 September wasn't "going away," that 11 September and the War on Terrorism would define this generation and shape geopolitical reality for at least the next decade if not longer. Gradually, the sickening realization came to me. The Prime Minister *had* sensed which way the political winds were blowing. Not globally, but then his instincts have never been very good, globally. But he had sensed, with complete accuracy, that Canadians were *right there with him* in his reaction to 11 September. They had Gander, Newfoundland to feel good about. They had the Memorial on Parliament Hill to shed a few crocodile tears and to listen to their own exalted opinion of themselves reflected back at them. They had their omission from President Bush's speech to be hurt and offended about. And that was the extent of the average Canadian's interest in 11 September. As quickly as possible, Canadians wanted to get back to their happy, insulated little navel-gazing existences and just forget that 11 September had ever happened. And Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, good "hollowed-out ventriloquist puppet" feminist husband and astute possessor of solid feminized Canadian instincts that he is, *knew* that. *Knew* that what Feminist Canada wanted was to have someone *promise* the United States whole-hearted support and then back away from it as quickly as possible before it cost anyone a few extra dollars on their taxes for helicopters that actually fly (our "Sea Kings," as the name would suggest, are from the 1960s) aircraft capable of transporting those armaments we do possess, communications equipment that is actually compatible with what every other NATO country is using or (heaven forbid!) artillery that might actually be used to *hurt* anyone.

As is usually the case in Canada there was little respite from our exclusive and bland daily diet of left liberal, quasi-socialist cant. When respite—*mercifully*—came, it arrived from an unexpected quarter, Canada's novice foreign minister, John Manley, who addressed a media "scrum" outside the Commons, 17 September saying, "Canada does not have a history as a pacifist or a neutralist country. Canada has soldiers that are buried all over Europe because we fought in defence of liberty. And we're not about to back away from a challenge now because we think somebody might get hurt." As might be expected, this had the highly feminized Liberal caucus stumbling all over themselves and each other to try and determine an appropriate reaction which, also not unexpectedly, was not forthcoming (since the only reaction a feminized Liberal has to the word "hurt" is "bad" or "stop" or "naughty"). Many of Mr. Manley's Cabinet colleagues over the ensuing two weeks "tried on" variations of the Manley approach which they just as quickly discarded, having evidently decided whatever trick Mr. Manley was "pulling" on everyone (the prominence of his brief remarks having vaulted him, overnight, from virtual obscurity to centre-stage in the national media) was a temporary phenomenon which would quickly fade from the national consciousness—which is rather the way the feminized Liberal caucus collectively viewed 11 September itself. On 4 October, likewise in a media "scrum" outside the Commons, Mr. Manley repeated the success of his initial "trick" (said "trick," of course, consisting of speaking the self-evident truth about Canada's responsibilities in the world) by saying, "You can't just sit at the G8 table and then, when the bill comes, go to the washroom. If you want to play a role in the world…there's a cost to doing that." Like Icarus, Mr. Manley was undoubtedly aware that, with this observation, he was flying rather "too near the sun"—which is to say, the Prime Minister. In masculine terms, he was getting "above his place" and verging on disloyalty to his leader. In feminized Liberal terms, he was leaving himself open to getting an interchangeably-male-or-female hatpin in the ribs since "sitting at the G8 table and then, when the bill comes, going to the washroom" is as concise an explication of the entirety of Liberal policy over the last thirty years regarding the G8—and NATO, for that matter—as you could hope to find distilled into a single sentence and, thus, to the self-deceiving feminized *poseurs* of the Liberal caucus an observation which verged on high treason. It was a singularly apt analogy because it made clear that Canada's course of action in the world in recent memory had been to behave in an entirely *dishonourable* fashion, in the masculine sense of the term. *Freeloading*, to use another masculine term. The loss of *personal honour* which attaches itself, irrevocably, to the sort of individual who slips off to the washroom to avoid paying his fair share of a restaurant bill is decidedly analogous to Canada's own loss of *national honour* in pulling the same trick, repeatedly, at the G8 table and in NATO. It was an eloquent reminder that in just these areas of *masculine honour* it is *dishonourable* to wait for someone to make an *issue* of such behaviour, rather than *avoiding* the behaviour in the first place or *correcting* the behaviour the moment one becomes aware

that one is behaving in a *dishonourable* fashion. In its own distinctly *dishonourably feminized* fashion, Canada happily strolls the world stage, hitching a free ride on everyone else in the G8 and thinking itself "clever" or "lucky" that, as a country, it is never "called to account". Only a woman or a dishonourable man can behave in such a fashion and retain a good opinion of her/his/*its* self.

With many Liberal hatpins now drawn and at the ready (a feminized version of the "long knives" of a more masculine age) Mr. Manley covered for himself, rather adroitly, by observing that Canada "punches above its weight in the world" because of the prestige which attaches itself to Prime Minister Chrétien as the G8 leader with the greatest seniority. I say that this was adroit because, while largely untrue, it did mirror the Prime Minister's perception of himself, thus absolving Mr. Manley of any charge of disloyalty…

(So much did the Prime Minister take Mr. Manley's observation to heart, that he insisted that the G8 meeting he hosted this summer would confine itself to his own chosen agenda: Assistance to Africa and not to that of President George Bush: the War on Terrorism and the President's Middle East Peace Initiative. The result would be much as you would expect, with the six other leaders having to choose between the agenda of the leader of a country that upholds its international obligations and the agenda of the leader of a country that slips out to the washroom when the dinner check arrives)

…and, through use of the term "punches above its weight," Mr. Manley was, again, able to compel the Liberal caucus to stumble all over themselves and each other since, again, feminized Liberals have a narrow spectrum of reactions to the word "punches" which is, likewise, limited to "bad," "stop" and "naughty". Having determined that "punching above one's weight" was unrelated to "caloric intake issues"—that the foreign minister was not in any way suggesting that the dress that Canada was wearing was unflattering to its body type—most of the Liberal caucus, male and female, took a turn using the phrase "punching above our weight" over the ensuing forty-eight hours and then discarded it, as well, as just another one of John Manley's strange and inexplicable conversational "tricks".

How bad *is* the situation facing Canada's military?

Pretty bad.

As Canada's Auditor-General, Sheila Fraser (who is doing a *wonderful* job, by the way, as I freely and enthusiastically admit: as I am always more than willing to do on those rare occasions when I see a woman genuinely distinguishing herself in a given field. Sheila Fraser, "two thumbs up! - Dave Sim") reported this year, Canada is unable to deploy one of its frigates because there are not enough qualified sailors. The army is short of weapons and fire-control technicians, engineers and mechanics (to maintain combat capabilities) while the Air Force doesn't have enough experienced fighter pilots. The navy has only 80% of the electronic technicians it needs to run its ships and submarines and is also short of naval weapons technicians, communicators and engineers. Since 1994 (Jean Chrétien's first full year as Prime Minister) defence spending has been reduced by 23% and the size of the Forces' regular personnel has been cut from 75,000 to 60,000. When retirement, sick leave and disciplinary measures (that is, the number of personnel in the brig or on suspension) are factored in, the number of effective members is just 52,300. Rather than look for qualified personnel, the Armed Forces continues to accept people it does not need, such as cooks, stewards and communication researchers.

In addition to Fraser's report (wherein she speculated that it could take 30 years to fill the gaps in the military population), the Senate Defence Committee and "other experts" have said the defence department needs an increase of $4 billion annually just to halt the erosion in the Forces' ability to fulfill its peace-keeping and military obligations.

The present *total* military budget is $11 billion annually.

Less than three months after promising at the Memorial service on Parliament Hill to stand "shoulder-to-shoulder" with the United States in the War on Terrorism, less than three months after swearing to U.S. ambassador Paul Cellucci that "together, with our allies, we will defy and defeat the threat that terrorism poses to all civilized nations" in his Budget tabled in the House of Commons in December of 2001, the Prime Minister pledged $1.2-billion of increased spending for the military.

Over *five years*.

That is, a whopping increase of military spending from $11 billion annually to $11.*25* billion annually. In any man's language, a national—and *international*—disgrace for a country of Canada's size and affluence.

Shame, sir.

SHAME!

Next issue: a closer examination of Canada's military contributions over the years

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